Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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NOTICE TO READERS: On 6 May 1991, the DAILY REPORT will begin phasing in new radio and television sourcelines that reflect how a station identifies itself. This change eliminates the "Domestic Service" and "Television Service" designations in favor of the station identification as broadcast. The presence of a new sourceline reflects this change in policy, rather than the establishment of a new station or network.

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Palestinian Affairs

PLO's Qaddumi Discusses Regional Conference

NC1805184191 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1805 GMT 18 May 91

[Text] Cairo, 18 May (MENA)—Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO political department and of the Palestinian delegation to 95th meeting of the Arab League Ministerial Council which concluded on Wednesday, left Cairo this afternoon.

In a predeparture statement, Qaddumi said that during his visit here he met with a number of Arab foreign ministers and discussed current regional developments.

Qaddumi said the Palestinian representation in the international peace conference should not be subject to any terms because the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. He stressed the need to provide guarantees for Israel's complete withdrawal from the occupied Arab and Palestinian lands. He also emphasized that Israeli settlement of the occupied Arab territories should be stopped and that the Jerusalem issue should be resolved.

Regarding Palestinian approval to participate in the peace talks with a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, Qaddumi said this is a procedural issue and the substance of the talks should be agreed upon first.

Interviewed on Conference, Dialogue

JN1805192691 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1740 GMT 18 May 91

[Interview with Faruq Qaddumi, alias Abu-al-Lutf, head of the PLO Political Department, by Radio Monte Carlo correspondent in Cairo Mustafa Bakri, date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Bakri] Brother Abu-al-Lutf, head of the PLO Political Department, now, following the meeting of Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] with Bessmertnykh, it seems that there is something new. What is this new thing?

[Qaddumi] The new thing is the clarification of the Soviet stand and support for the Palestinian position regarding the need to hold an international peace conference to be attended by the PLO with the participation of the European states. Undoubtedly, coming closer to the international resolution calling for an international conference facilitates the peace process in the Middle East.

[Bakri] The Soviets had earlier stressed to Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] during his recent visit to Moscow that they still believed the PLO to be the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and that they saw the need for the PLO to attend the future negotiations. Now, are the Soviets sticking to the view that the PLO should attend with an independent delegation, for example?

[Qaddumi] Yes, the Soviets sill believe this. This matter concerns the Palestinians. Therefore, the attendance of a Palestinian delegation, appointed by the PLO, is necessary to make the conference a success from the beginning.

[Bakri] Can we say that this delegation might attend as a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, for example?

[Qaddumi] This is premature. We should agree on the essence of the conference, the peace conference, and on the form of this conference before we come to procedural matters. However, the attendance of a Palestinian delegation is imperative.

[Bakri] Again, what are the required specifications for a peace conference, according to the PLO?

[Qaddumi] The issue is not what the PLO adopts, but what the international community has agreed upon. In his speech of 16 September 1988, Shultz pointed this out. It is an international conference to be attended by the PLO and the UN Security Council permanent member states, in accordance with the UN Security Council resolution and the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

[Bakri] How far do you think Israel would go in accepting these principles?

[Qaddumi] Israel does not accept these principles. Israel rejected them from the very beginning. It is the only obstacle to a just settlement in the region.

[Bakri] Abu-al-Lutf, how do you view Syria's role in the coming talks, if they take place?

[Qaddumi] Syria is a major party to these talks. This is a declared, well-known, and firm position.

[Bakri] Do you believe that time is now ripe to settle the Middle East crisis or the Arab-Israeli conflict?

[Qaddumi] We keep saying that tension is escalating in the region and that Israel must not flatter itself that circumstances in the region support its intransigence, because the result will be further tension and more wars.

[Bakri] How do you assess the step declared by the Gulf Cooperation Council member states; namely, that they are prepared to take part in a peace conference, even in an observer capacity?

[Qaddumi] We were surprised by that decision. I do not believe there is a need for the Gulf countries, or their representatives, to attend the conference.

[Bakri] The Palestinian intifadah has now entered a new phase of escalation against Israel. If a peace conference gets under way, what will the position be as regards the Palestinian intifadah?

[Qaddumi] The Vietnamese were fighting and negotiating at the same time. Our situation will be similar.

[Bakri] Abu-al-Lutf, what is the state of Egyptian-Palestinian relations?

[Qaddumi] We are now going through a new phase in relations with our brothers in the entire Arab region, beginning with sisterly Egypt as the biggest Arab country. Undoubtedly, there are good signs on the horizon indicating there will be relations based on understanding and clarity.

[Bakri] Can we also ask about the ties between the PLO and the EC in the current stage?

[Qaddumi] Following the Gulf crisis, ties between the PLO and Europe were [words indistinct]. However, our contacts with Europe went back to normal.

[Bakri] Baker proposes the convening of the peace conference in two stages, the first for the Arab countries to discuss security issues and the Israeli occupation of some Arab areas, and the second to discuss the Palestine question through an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. What is your assessment?

[Qaddumi] This is an attempt to avoid the core and substance of the problem, which is the Palestine question. The Arab-Israeli conflict, as Shultz said in Cairo on 6 June 1988, is between two nationalistic movements: the Zionist movement and the Palestinian national movement. It seems the United States has a bad memory in these circumstances and forgets some of the facts, which it acknowledges every now and then under political and international pressure, whenever it wants. Therefore, there is the Palestine question. If we start resolving this question, there will be no other issues difficult to resolve.

[Bakri] Abu-al-Lutf, you recently held talks with the Lebanese foreign minister on armed Palestinians in Lebanon. What was the result of those talks? Have you proposed any specific formula to deal with the matter?

[Qaddumi] We have clearly stressed to the Lebanese minister that we would not be an obstruction to the Lebanese Government's attempts to extend its authority over all of Lebanon. This is their right. But what encroaches on Lebanese sovereignty is Israeli occupation. If this occupation is removed, there will be no encroachment on Lebanese sovereignty. We can reach an agreement with our brothers in Lebanon on the armed Palestinian deployment in Lebanon. We have already started in the northern areas to limit this deployment. God willing, with time and when these measures are completed, when circumstances are appropriate, and when the Israeli occupation is removed from Lebanon, we will see the Lebanese Government taking full control over the whole of Lebanon.

[Bakri] The trial of hundreds of Palestinians accused of collaborating with the Iraqi occupation troops will begin tomorrow in Kuwait. What will the PLO do to ensure a fair trial for those Palestinians?

[Qaddumi] First, we reject the prosecution of Palestinians in Kuwait. We see this as a violation of Arab and international norms and of justice itself. There was no such thing as the so-called collaboration with the occupation. Our views may differ. But it seems that some people like to level accusations against some Palestinians there. Therefore, we say those trials are illegal and will deepen the wounds between us and our brothers in Kuwait. We would like the trials stopped, and we would like them to resort to reconciliation instead. If there are a few things straining Palestinian-Kuwaiti ties, there are legitimate channels such as the Arab League or arbitration between us and our brothers in Kuwait. But Palestinians should not be brought before courts because this will turn into something that we cannot let pass.

[Bakri] Abu-al-Lutf, are there any attempts to revive the Palestinian-U.S. dialogue?

[Qaddumi] We have tried over and over again to explain to Mr. Baker, through the nationalist figures that met with Baker on several occasions, that dialogue must be held directly with the Palestinian leadership. The United States, however, is still hesitant about holding the dialogue.

[Bakri] Lastly, do you plan to convene the Palestine National Council to discuss Palestinian and Arab developments?

[Qaddumi] A decision has been made in this regard, and a committee comprising all the factions, the independents, and the mass organizations has started work to prepare for a Palestine National Council session.

[Bakri] Thank you, Abu-al-Lutf.

Comments on Lebanese Cabinet Decisions

NC2005131591 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1130 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO political department, has stressed that the Palestinian presence in Lebanon will not only not hinder the imposition of the state's authority throughout Lebanese territory, but it will help achieve this goal so that Lebanon can regain its health.

In an interview with AL-LIWA' newspaper, Qaddumi denied that the PLO has set any conditions for abiding by the Cabinet decisions and held Israel responsible for impeding their implementation. He said that implementation of UN Resolution 425 requires Lebanese-Palestinian-Syria cooperation. He added that he and [Lebanese] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz agreed that contacts on all levels will continue.

Kuwait

Minister Denies Iraqi Troops on Borders

LD2005222191 (Clandestine) Radio Kuwait in Arabic 2100 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Defense Minister Shaykh 'Ali Sabah al-Salim has denied the presence of Iraqi troop concentrations on Kuwaiti borders and has described reports on this as mere rumors.

In statements to journalists after his meeting today with British Defense Secretary Tom King, who is currently on a visit to the country, he said the UN peacekeeping forces deployed on the Iraqi-Kuwaiti borders, the friendly forces, and the relevant bodies of his ministry have all affirmed that these reports are groundless.

The defense minister stressed that Kuwait does not intend to establish foreign military bases on its territory—either British or American. But, he said, Kuwait will ask for the help of the forces of the Gulf Cooperation Council Arab member states and the fraternal and friendly forces, if necessary.

The defense minister said the morale of the Kuwaiti Army is high, and he noted that the Army will not be taking part in the arms-collecting operation currently under way, as this is the prerogative of the Interior Ministry.

Minister Cited on Reconstruction, Arab Relations

PM1505113691 London SAWT AL-KUWAYT AL-DUWALI in Arabic 13 May 91 p 2

[Madi al-Khamis report: "Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Tells SAWT AL-KUWAYT: Follow Up of Prisoners and Missing Persons is a Top Government Priority"]

[Excerpts] Kuwait— Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dari 'Abdallah al-'Uthman has confirmed that the ministerial committees are playing a major role in the work of the executive authorities and in supervising the implementation of the emergency plans and reconstruction and in following up on missing persons. [passage omitted]

He revealed that the Kuwaiti authorities have arrested eight members of the so-called provisional government formed by the occupation authorities, and they have now been referred to the Kuwaiti justice department.

The minister of state for Cabinet affairs said that the fire extinguishing operations were proceeding in an orderly manner, with understanding among all parties concerned. Kuwait, he added, is regaining its health through the efforts of its people and officials. [passage omitted]

He emphasized that "there are no differences between the Kuwaiti Government and the fire-fighting companies." He added: "matters are proceeding well, and Kuwait highly appreciates the roles played by the U.S. companies and all the friends and brothers who supported us in this crisis, which we hope God will help us to contain, to bring under control these great, unprecedented fires as soon as possible. God willing, the operation to bring the oil fires under control will be an example of cooperation in support of right and justice against wrong in all fields." [passage omitted]

Minister al-'Uthman also said: "The injustice to which Kuwait was subjected during the oppressive Iraqi occupation of Kuwait means that there will be new foundations for Kuwait's Arab relations. Kuwait has been and, God willing, will remain an integral part of the Arab world." He added: "We want Arab relations to be solid and immune. The Arab world will undoubtedly benefit from the lessons learned as a result of the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait." [passage omitted]

He continued: "Before the Iraqi invasion there were no apparent differences between the Arab states to warrant talk about reconciliation. That is why we talk, not about Arab reconciliation, but about a reassessment of Arab relations to ensure that the future Arab attitude will always and in all circumstances be one of support for justice, and completely detached from deviation and from support for aggression." [passage omitted]

On the fate of the individuals used by the Iraqi regime to form the provisional government after the abominable occupation of Kuwait, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dari al-'Uthman said: "They are now in Kuwait and are being questioned by the authorities." There are eight of them, he said, and the investigation of the nature of the charges against them and the crimes they have committed is being referred to competent authorities, "after which they will be referred to the judiciary authorities for trial."

In conclusion, al-'Uthman said that Kuwait will have a bright future. He also said that under no circumstance would there be any possibility of restoring Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations while the current Iraqi regime remains in power.

On the agreement reached between the Kurds and Saddam Husayn, he said: "From a humanitarian viewpoint, we wish the Iraqi Kurds could be safe from the tyranny of that regime."

Defense Minister Warns: Saddam Still Threatens

PM2005154791 London SAWT AL-KUWAYT AL-DUWALI in Arabic 17 May 91 p 1

[Madi al-Khamis report: "Warning and Assuring, Kuwaiti Defense Minister Says: Security Arrangements Prevent Repetition of Catastrophe"]

[Excerpt] Kuwait—Kuwaiti Defense Minister Shaykh 'Ali Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah has warned that the danger still exists and that the tyrant continues to make threats.

He said that the tyrant of Baghdad always says that he signed the treaty with Kuwait because he was compelled

to and pressured—which proves his ill intentions. The defense minister cited Saddam Husayn's statements at several press and media conferences saying that the tyrant of Baghdad announced that the Arab knights were unable to conquer Constantinople the first time, failing in several attempts. And he described himself as one of the Arab knights who tried and failed, but a new knight will come after him.

The defense minister emphasized that, despite these threats, there are security arrangements which prevent the recurrence of the catastrophe, pointing out that there must be an Iranian role in the process of security arrangements for the Arabian Gulf. [passage omitted]

UK Defense Secretary King Arrives 20 May

LD2005111691 London KUNA in Arabic 1030 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Kuwait, 20 May (KUNA)—British Defense Secretary Tom King arrived here this morning on an official visit, during which he will hold talks with senior Kuwaiti officials on security arrangements in the Gulf region.

In a statement to the press on his arrival, King said that his country will reinforce and strengthen the security arrangements to be made by the Gulf Cooperation Council member-states, adding that the security system in the Gulf must stem from the Gulf states themselves.

The British defense secretary went on to say "there must be a role to be played by the United States and Britain, in addition to Egypt and Syria, in any security system to be set up in the Gulf region".

King also indicated that during his current visit to Kuwait he will discuss with Kuwaiti officials "the position of the British troops in Kuwait," but he added that the British troops will return home soon.

In reply to a question on what if Saddam Husayn were to attack Kuwait again, the British defense secretary said "this will definitely never happen, because Saddam would be stupid to do it since he has been defeated and destroyed, and he will not dare to do such a thing."

Crown Prince Expresses Gratitude to Saudi King

LD1605154591 Riyadh SPA in English 1221 GMT 16 May 91

[Text] Jeddah, May 16, SPA—Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti crown prince and prime minister has expressed gratitude and deep-seated appreciation to custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz for the courageous and brotherly stance of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia against the aggression of the Iraqi regime on Kuwait.

Speaking in an interview published by the Kuwaiti daily newspaper AL-SEYYASSAH on Wednesday, Shaykh Sa'd said King Fahd had undertaken the most courageous and serious decision that might be undertaken in such circumstances.

Shaykh Sa'd made it clear the Iraqi aggression could have had threatened the entire Arab Gulf states if the world had not undertaken that solid and unanimous stand against the invasion of Kuwait.

Shaykh Sa'd also thanked the other Gulf Cooperation Council member states for the great sacrifice they offered to liberate Kuwait and help its people.

Prime Minister Receives Former U.S. Officials

LD1205221491 London KUNA in Arabic 1824 GMT 12 May 91

[Text] Kuwait, 12 May (KUNA)—His Excellency Shaykh Sa'd al-Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, the heir apparent and prime minister, received at his office in Bayan Palace at 1700 Mr. Caspar Weinberger, former U.S. defense secretary, and Mr. William Clark, former deputy chairman of the National Security Council, during their visit to the country.

The audience was attended by Minister of Electricty and Water, Ahmad Muhammad Salih al-'Adasani.

Saudi Arabia

King Fahd Welcomes Arrival of Omani Sultan

LD2005080391 Riyadh SPA in English 0118 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Riyadh, May 19, SPA—Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman was given a red-carpet welcome upon arrival here this evening on a visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

He was greeted at King Khalid International Airport by the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz.

He was also received by Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the second deputy premier, minister of defense, aviation and inspector general.

Sultan Qabus was also greeted upon arrival by Prince Salman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the governor of Riyadh region; Hisham Nazir, the minister of petroleum, mineral resources and acting planning minister and escorting minister; Hamad al-Ma'mari, the Omani ambassador to the kingdom; many princes, ministers and high-ranking civil and military officials.

Sultan Qabus is accompanied by a high-level delegation composed of Qays al-Zawawi, the deputy premier for financial and economic affairs; Sayf Bin-Hamad, the minister of sultan's court; General 'Ali Majid al-Ma'mari, palace affairs minister; and Yusuf Bin-'Abdallah, the state minister for foreign affairs.

Sources Report PRC 'Rejected' 'Aziz Visit

JN1805165191 Manama WAKH in English 1615 GMT 18 May 91

[Text] Tokyo, May 18 (GNA)—Chinese authorities rejected a visit by the Iraqi regime's Deputy Premier Tariq 'Aziz at the end of this month, informed diplomatic sources revealed Saturday.

The sources, asking not to be identified, told KUNA that 'Aziz wanted to pay an official visit to the Chinese capital for talks on bilateral cooperation but the request was turned down by the Chinese Government.

The sources added that 'Aziz's visit was designed "to play around UN resolutions" setting sanctions against Iraq for invading Kuwait in August.

China, a major arms exporter to Iraq before the August invasion, was not ready to break the strict UN sanctions against the Baghdad regime at this time, the sources stressed.

'Aziz was foreign minister until a major reshuffle last month.

Arab, Foreign Diplomatic Missions Resume Work

JN2105085891 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0809 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] Baghdad, 21 May (INA)—The newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH has said that a number of accredited Arab and foreign missions in Baghdad have resumed diplomatic activity after the break due to the U.S. aggression against Iraq.

The newspaper, published here today, said the missions of Oman, Yugoslavia, the PRC, Poland, Romania, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco, Malta, Bulgaria, India, and Lebanon, have resumed activities and started to open their embassies in Baghdad.

It noted that these states have returned their accredited mission members who are authorized to resume work, some on the level of ambassador or temporary charge d'affaires.

It added that the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, the Philippines, Canada, Nigeria, Senegal, and Australia have arrived in Baghdad to carry out their diplomatic tasks and duties.

Saddam Receives 'Arafat Letter on Palestine Issue

JN2005102991 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1002 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Baghdad, 20 May (INA)—President Saddam Husayn has received a written message from his brother Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, on fraternal relations between the two friendly peoples and the latest developments on the Palestine question.

'Abdallah Hurani, member of the PLO Executive Committee, handed the message to his excellency during a meeting today.

Tariq 'Aziz, deputy prime minister, and 'Azzam al-Ahmad, ambassador of the state of Palestine in Baghdad, attended the meeting.

UN Envoy Presents 'Evidence' of Iran's 'Crimes'

JN1905144691 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1406 GMT 19 May 91

[Text] New York, 19 May (INA)—Iraq's permanent representative to the United nations has presented new documented evidence of the crimes Iranian forces are committing against our Armed Forces in a manner detrimental to the inviolability and sovereignty of Iraqi territory.

Iraq's permanent representatives sent a memorandum to the UN secretary general explaining that Iran has committed many bestial crimes against the Iraqi forces, thus violating the cease-fire agreement between Iraq and Iran.

He reported that 52 Iraqis were found dead in the southern sector on 1 May 1991, and that 48 others were found dead in the same sector on 2 May.

He added that Iranian infiltrators carried out a mass execution of the two groups after tying the martyrs' hands behind their backs, blindfolding them, and pushing them down to the ground in the area of Kut al-Sawadi during the last week of March 1991.

In his memorandum, the Iraqi representative said that most of the wounds were to the head; some of the corpses were mutilated; and those belonging to the military were stripped of their uniform and documents so that their identity could not be determined.

On 14 May, the memorandum pointed out, two groups of Iraqi martyrs were found dead in Kirkh al-Basri area in the southern sector after having been executed by Iranian infiltrators who crossed over from Iran.

Housing Minister, Governor Discuss Services

JN2005112891 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1057 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Dahuk, northern Iraq, 20 May (INA)—Engineer Mahmud Dhiyab al-Ahmad, minister of housing and reconstruction, discussed today with Dahuk Governor Muhammad Bayruz Rustum ways of speeding up the process of providing the governorate with services.

Engineer al-Ahmad told the INA correspondent in the governorate that two working teams will arrive in Dahuk to speed up the work of providing services to the citizens.

On 17 May, President Saddam Husayn chaired a meeting of a number of officials during which discussion revolved round the basic services in the Governorate of Dahuk.

The president advised that the necessary measures should be taken to provide all the basic services and to supply civilians with the the essentials for living in the city and other parts of the governorate to speed up the return of the displaced people.

A working team, which comprises representatives of a number of ministries, discussed with the Duhuk governor and a number of officials yesterday the necessary measures to provide the governorate and the adjacent areas with the basic requirements—water, electricity, communications, and food—to expedite the return of evacuees from the Kurdish families.

The INA correspondent said that he saw a number of trucks loaded with food, flour, and fuel arriving in the governorate for distribution to the citizens. He added that electrical power will be restored with full capacity on Wednesday.

Ministry Inspects Measures To Restore Services

JN2005054491 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2005 GMT 19 May 91

[Text] Duhuk, 19 May (INA)—A working team which visited the Duhuk Governorate today inspected the necessary measures to provide basic services such as water, electricity, communications, and foodstuffs to the governorate and its sub-districts to speed up the return of the displaced Kurdish people.

The INA correspondent said that the team chaired by Mr. Suhayl Muhammad Salih, undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, discussed this subject with Duhuk Governor Muhammad Bayruz Rustum and a number of officials and heads of services departments in the Governorate.

He said he saw scores of trucks arriving in the governorate loaded with foodstuffs and flour, as well as fuel trucks to distribute it on the citizens on presentation of the ration card.

He noted that the electrical current will return with full capacity to the Duhuk Governorate next Wednesday.

Trade Minister on Supplies, Services in Duhuk

JN2005120991 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1125 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Duhuk, 20 May (INA)—Trade Minister Muhammad Mahdi Salih has affirmed that the departments of his ministry have adopted the necessary measures to continue the supply of foodstuffs to Duhuk Governorate. During a meeting with the Duhuk governor and officials in charge of trade departments, Salih noted that the Duhuk central market will begin work next Wednesday after repairing the damage caused by the American aggression against Iraq and the sabotage perpetrated by criminals during the riots.

The manager of the Public Company for Foodstuff Trading in the governorate told the INA correspondent that the company has sent fleets of trucks to Zakho, al-'Amadiyah, and Sarsank to provide the citizens with their share of supplies.

The Ministry of Health also formed a medical working team to provide the governorate with medical and preventative care as well as laboratory services. The team comprises a number of specialist doctors and nurses to provide laboratory and clinical services.

Official on Electric Power Supply, Repair Work

JN1705175891 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1620 GMT 17 May 91

[Text] Baghdad, 17 May (INA)—Electric-generating units repaired in the past two months supply 35 percent of Iraq's electric needs.

Engineer Subhi Najm Ibrahim, director general of the Electricity Department at the Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization, said that power generating capacity prior to 16 January totaled 5,162 megawatts. In contrast, the capacity has reached 1,580 megawatts as of the 12th of this month.

In an interview aired on television tonight, he said that work is under way to repair and recondition power stations and other electrical conduction and distribution networks. He said: Despite the fact that little has been achieved, it is considered a great success by national work teams if we take into consideration the available means, the circumstances of the economic blockade, and the time limit for this achievement, which has not exceeded two months, when Western circles predicted that it would take at least two years to restore electric power to Iraq.

Mr. Ibrahim explained that Western circles based their estimations on the mass destruction that was inflicted by air and missile strikes on electric-generating installations throughout Iraq. He added that 90 percent of the power-generating networks and installations in Iraq were damaged, and that the remaining 10 percent of these installations were partially impaired and are in need of repair and refurbishment.

He expressed hope that power-generating capacity will reach 2,600 megawatts by July. He asserted, however, that this level of production would be less than the minimum level needed at this time of the year, at which domestic consumption is at its peak.

The main obstacle to the plan of repairing speedily and resuming the operation of all generation networks in Iraq is the fact that these installations need some important, basic spare parts that cannot be imported from abroad because of the circumstances of the economic blockade. He noted that there are many power-generating units that have been totally destroyed and, therefore, must be replaced since they have fallen into a state of disrepair.

The director general of the Electricity Department pointed out that all Iraqi governorates are now linked to the national electricity grid, after Dahuk Governorate was recently linked to the grid lines.

He also made it known that, given the shortage of electric power, it will be mandatory to suspend the supply of electricity for six to eight hours daily in accordance with a program that covers all areas in Baghdad and other governorates.

Results of Dialogue With Kurds Announced Soon

JN2105064991 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0622 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] Baghdad, 21 May (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH has said that the results of the recent dialogue between the delegations of the Iraqi leadership and the Kurdish parties will be announced in the next few days.

The newspaper, which reported the news today, described the results of this dialogue as very positive and marked by a constructive spirit in all stages.

It added that the dialogue had concentrated essentially on developing the experiment of autonomy for Iraq's Kurdistan. It also aimed to strengthen this experiment in order to entrench national unity to confront the attempts of Iraq's enemies to interfere in the internal affairs and benefit from the abnormal situation which has prevailed in the northern part in the past.

80,000 Kurds Reported To Return to Zakho

JN2105105291 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1010 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] Baghdad, 21 May (INA)—Taking advantage of the amnesty decision, as of yesterday the number of citizens from Kurdish families who have returned to the district of Zakho in Dahuk Governorate in northern Iraq stood at 80,000 out of a total of 103,000 citizens, constituting the residents of the district .

Mr. Dawud Sulayman, Zakho administrative officer, told the INA correspondent in the governorate that all the measures for restoring services to the district have been taken to facilitate the return of the Kurdish families.

The correspondent was told that foodstuffs and oil products have been distributed and potable water has been made available to the returning citizens. Zakho Central Hospital and the clinics affiliated to it have started to provide medical services to the citizens.

Barzani on Autonomy, Meeting With Saddam

JN2105100291 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0915 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] Baghdad, 21 May (INA)—Mas'ud Barzani, leader of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, has emphasized that President Saddam Husayn's leadership is the only basic guarantee for the Kurds' in any agreement. He said that President Saddam Husayn reassures us about our demands and rights. Mr. Barzani described his meeting with President Saddam Husayn as positive, fruitful, and terrific.

In a dialogue with Ahmad Sabri, political affairs editor of the weekly magazine ALIF BA', he added: President Saddam Husayn has spoken about essential points that proved his love for the Kurds, his concern for the Kurdish problem, and the soundness of his treatment of its developments.

He said: I and members of the delegation emerged from the meeting comfortable and very confident that we are at the threshold of a new stage of Arab-Kurdish brotherhood based on mutual trust and overcoming the past with a positive spirit, whose crux is a strong and united Iraq.

Mr. Barzani said that the delegation was not surprised by President Saddam Husayn's high sense of responsibility and his sincere concern for and desire to tackle all the issues that have been brought up for discussion. He stressed that President Saddam Husayn was brave, clear, and determined to reach an agreement and resuscitate the principles and contents of the 11 March 1970 agreement.

Mr. Mas'ud Barzani drew attention to President Saddam Husayn's role in giving life to the 11 March agreement, saying: Caution and worry have permeated the peace talks, but following a closed meeting between President Saddam Husayn and my father, Mustafa Barzani, the two emerged out from the meeting smiling, and so worry was dissipated and delight overwhelmed the audience.

Barzani stated that His Excellency President Saddam Husayn was "the architect of autonomous rule for the Kurds, since he played a key role in producing the March declaration and bringing it to maturity."

In his interview, Barzani added that the Kurdish delegation was holding a dialogue with senior leaders in light of the directives of his excellency the president. He added: We are a single working team rather than two teams.

Barzani went on to say: The atmosphere of Arab-Kurdish brotherhood permeated the meetings held by the single working team. The atmosphere was at its best during these meetings. We feel that we are agreed on everything, and that Iraq is great.

Mas'ud Barzani reviewed the results produced by these meetings, adding: We agreed to form two joint committees to prepare the documents on the agreement. The first committee was charged with bringing the situation back to normal in Iraqi Kurdistan, while the second committee was tasked with considering ways of enhancing national unity and developing autonomous rule on the basis of the objectives and principles enshrined in the 11 March 1970 declaration. He stressed that an agreement based on safeguarding Iraq's interests closes all doors to malicious and lowly attempts to

obstruct unity and fraternal ties between Arabs and Kurds. He said: Our eagerness to safeguard Iraq's unity and sovereignty and to confirm the existence of an Arab-Kurdish brotherhood and our adherence to all this is the response to all attempts by regional and world powers to cast doubts.

Barzani referred to attempts to prevent Kurds from returning home after the issuance of the general amnesty decision, and said: Death in the shade of a palm tree on the coast of the Tigris or the Euphrates or under an oak tree in Iraqi Kurdistan is preferable to life in any world city.

Mas'ud Barzani urged Kurds who were compelled to leave the homeland to return as soon as possible. He affirmed that his arrival in Baghdad reflects the pursuit of a nationalist option.

RCC Decision Abolishes 'Revolution's Court'

JN2005181091 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1750 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Baghdad, 20 May (INA)—INA has learned that the Revolution Command Council [RCC] today issued a decision to abolish the Revolution's Court in view of the requirements of the new phase, the features of which were outlined by President Saddam Husayn's 16 March speech, and to enhance the role of the Iraqi judiciary in accordance with its known formations, laws, and powers.

The decision states that the Presidential Office shall liquidate the assets of the Revolution's Court and return all cases referred to it to the Legal Affairs Department of that office as a prelude to referring them to competent courts so that they can be looked into in accordance with the law.

The decision to abolish the court goes into effect as of today, the date of its issuance.

The Revolution Court was established in accordance with Law No. 85 of 1969, which was passed in response to the extraordinary circumstances in Iraq at the time.

Army Suffers 'Heavy Losses' in Provincial Combat

LD2005110291 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] During an attack launched by the Iraqi popular forces yesterday, troops of the Iraqi armed forces suffered heavy losses in the town of Kahla, in Iraq's Missan Province. According to a Central News Unit report, the news sources in the region, when they announced the attack, added that during these operations more than 50 Iraqi troops were wounded and several were captured by opposition forces. This report also says that in the course of these operations Iraqi opposition forces captured arms and ammunition as booty.

The report adds that Iraqi opposition forces are engaged in battles against Iraqi armed forces in the regions of al-Majidiyah, al-Mu'allamayn, and the towns of al-Sharq and al-Gharb in Missan Province.

Rebel Radio Reports 'Furious Fighting' in Al-Kahla

NC2005163291 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Opposition in Arabic 1500 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] The popular opposition forces have launched attacks on the despotic regime's forces stationed in al-Kahla town in Maysan Governorate for the past two days. They inflicted substantial losses on the regime's forces, captured a large number of soldiers, and seized a large amount of arms and materiel.

The forces of the uprising have launched another attack on the headquarters of the 4th Division stationed in the same governorate, capturing more than 50 soldiers and seizing a large amount of arms and materiel.

Meanwhile, the despotic regime has lost control of the al-Majidiyah and al-Mu'allimin areas. This prompted the regime's forces to shell these two areas with heavy artillery.

In another development, the forces of the uprising have taken control of the towns of 'Ali al-Sharqi and 'Ali al-Gharbi, where there is furious fighting between the forces of the uprising and the regime's forces which are trying to recapture the two towns.

Arens Comments on Syria-Lebanon Accord

TA2005155291 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] As world attention focused on the Gulf crisis, the Syrians turned Lebanon into their protectorate. Defense Minister Moshe Arens told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee today. Minister Arens estimated that this is a problem for which Israel will have to prepare and added that initial contacts on the matter have been held with the United States. Minister Arens denied reports that Israel would be prepared to hold talks with an independent delegation from the territories. Our correspondent Udi Segal reports.

The Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee concentrated on Lebanon and the fact that it has been swallowed up by Syria, as committee members termed it. Defense Minister Moshe Arens dwelled on the clause in the agreement between the two countries that stipulated that the present Syrian force in Lebanon will remain and may be reinforced in the future by mutual agreement, without any limitation on the location, composition, or size of the force. In fact, that clause permits the deployment of Syrian soldiers along Israel's northern border and even heavy weapons and surface-to-air missile batteries. The defense minister expressed his opinion that events in the North are turning into a problem with which Israel will have to contend.

[Begin Arens recording] I believe this is a serious development that contradicts all accepted norms in the world today. Here is one nation simply swallowing another up. This is not much different from what Saddam Husayn tried to do in Kuwait. Now we see the Syrians simply taking over Lebanon. A situation has been created in which they dictate to the Lebanese Government—if that is what you want to call it—its moves and force it to sign an accord which allows the deployment of Syrian troops in Lebanon by virtue of a joint decision, but again, joint only in a very limited sense. This is grave. [end recording]

As for the disarming of the Lebanese militias: Some of them, including many terrorist organizations, have somehow been omitted from the agreement, leaving the threat of terrorism very much alive. Israel has already alerted the Americans to dangerous points in the agreements signed in connection with the Lebanese issue.

[Begin Arens recording] We worry about our interests and will not accept anything that harms our interests or affects state security. [end recording]

On the political process, the defense minister said that he hopes Egypt will play a positive role in anticipation of talks in the region, and expressed the hope that Jordan will agree to participate in a regional conference despite Syrian pressure.

Arens denied reports that Israel is prepared to hold talks with an independent delegation from the territories that would include seven residents of Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza District.

[Begin Arens recording] I saw the headlines in some of this morning's newspapers. They are completely unfounded. The issue has not been discussed at all in our talks with Secretary Baker during his latest visit. We prefer a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. So far we have not held any discussions on its composition. [end recording]

The issue of the investigation of conduct at IDF [Israel Defense Forces] installations was also broached this morning. In this context, and in reference to the harsh Betzelem report against the Shin Bet, Knesset member [MK] Yossi Sarid from the Citizens Rights Movement and MK Uzi Landau [from the Likud] engaged in a verbal clash. The latter called the authors of the report collaborators with the enemy and haters of Israel. Sarid said that the Betzelem personnel are Israeli patriots.

Levi on Baker Remarks, U.S. Condemnation

TA2105061791 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 21 May 91

[Telephone interview with Foreign Minister David Levi by Shalom Qitai and political correspondent Arye Golan—live]

[Text] [Qitai] Good morning, Mr. Foreign Minister.

[Levi] Good morning.

[Qitai] I assume the talks with Walesa, despite the tragic past which is being discussed, are easier to conduct than the talks with Baker, which revolve around the future. Am I right?

[Levi] There is no need to confuse things; there is a difference. In the first instance, we are trying to build a bridge to a future in which relations between the two countries will be better than in the past. In this case, we have a partner for talks. That partner came to us, and we are conversing with him. In addition, he said what he did from the Knesset podium [reference to Poland's Lech Walesa asking for Jewish people's forgiveness for World War II events]. The two countries are planning joint activities.

The difference lies in the fact that where the Arab countries are concerned, we have been trying to move things for many years but, to our chagrin, have so far found no partner with whom we can talk face to face. To promote the peace process, Israel is doing and has always done all it can, both by launching an initiative and by responding favorably to certain proposals which do not endanger it.

[Golan] Speaking of the political process, our press reported in the past few days that during Baker's visit last week, Israel and Baker agreed on the issue of the Palestinian delegation's composition. Is this true? Has there been a decision regarding the names of the Palestinian delegates to negotiations with Israel?

[Levi] First of all, there has been no decision regarding the names of the delegates. Second, I will not discuss details.

What I am able to say is that when Baker left Israel, the situation was such that Israel could not be blamed for anything—if anyone is to be blamed—because Israel has done its best, and it expects the same from the Arab countries. We are waiting for Baker's move. Naturally, that move cannot be carried out in a flash, but it cannot take long, either. Once it has been made, we will know whether the Arab countries mean peace.

[Qital] Judging by signs from Washington, this waiting period will last some time, because Baker said last night that he does not plan to return.

[Levi] No, I suggest we do not make deductions from anyone's remarks. It has already been proved that.... [changes thought] You may have noticed that before his visit, things were said which were completely contradictory to what happened on his arrival, to the length of his tour, to the discussions, and to the good atmosphere which prevailed throughout our discussions. Therefore, in politics, sometimes things are said that do not correspond to intentions. In any event, we live in a new era of direct links, electronic links. Furthermore, people can explore and examine situations without being physically present at the site.

[Golan] He says he will return if there is cause. In your opinion, does he have a reason to return to the Middle East after the recent tour?

[Levi] I can only talk from the Israeli viewpoint: Israel has not given him cause not to return and not to make progress. Since this is the state of things, he is now waiting for the results of the moves he initiated and in which the President also intervened. Unfortunately, Syria has planted mines, so to speak. We have heard its recent statements, made only a few days ago, which threaten to torpedo the peace initiative. I hope that common sense will prevail and that we will be able to break the vicious circle of hostility and to move on to a peace process, which is what Israel aspires to, as it has shown by making a general effort and by proposing an initiative of its own.

[Qital] To conclude, Mr. Levi, a question about last night's condemnation of the deportation of four Palestinians. Are you disappointed?

[Levi] Do you think we do this joyfully? I reiterate: No nation that is forced to wage bloody confrontations each day can be expected to let those responsible for the confrontations go free and pursue normal activities as if nothing happened, while the government's hands remain tied. We do not have a policy of deportations within the framework of our struggle against rioters. We use several methods in our struggle, and this is but one of them.

Those who condemn Israel are in fact ignoring the fact that these people spill the blood of innocent people and exploit Israel's rule of law. These people can appeal to an Israeli court, which they do. By the way, there is no precedent of other countries forced to wage similar struggles making their courts available to those responsible for murders and rioting.

I was in Europe last week, in Brussels, as you know. One evening, Maghreb natives who live in Brussels rioted as if they were conducting an intifadah. The local security forces treated the rioters with an iron fist, quelling the rampage. I saw their methods. When I asked what was going on, I was told: There are no compromises when security is at stake. So, when the problem lands at the doorstep of those who condemn us, they themselves make no compromises in safeguarding their security.

I hope we will finally be able to secure at least the understanding that Israel is facing terrorism, that there can be no coexistence with terrorism, that terrorism must be combated. Terrorism does not threaten Jews alone; it threatens Arabs, too. As we have seen, Arabs have been murdering their brethren in the most savage and cruel manner in many parts of the world. Israel is obliged to wage a struggle against all this.

[Qital] Mr. Levi, the foreign minister, thank you very much.

[Levi] All the best.

Poland's Walesa Meets With Shamir, Levi

Shamir Comments

TA2005171691 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 20 May 91

[Interview with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir by political correspondent Arye Golan in Jerusalem "immediately after Shamir's meeting with Polish President Lech Walesa about an hour ago"—recorded]

[Text] [Golan] Mr. Prime Minister, what is your attitude toward Lech Walesa's request for forgiveness in the Knesset?

[Shamir] I believe that nothing was more natural than that. I accept it willingly, since we now have normal relations between the two peoples, the two states, and it is good that people are aware of what happened in the past.

[Golan] Did you speak to him in Polish?

[Shamir] No.

[Golan] Why not?

[Shamir] I understand Polish; therefore, I did not require an interpreter to translate what he said, but it is now difficult for me to express myself in Polish. We mostly spoke about the future. I believe that we have something to do together. He invited me to Poland. I believe I will go if time permits, and we will see what can be done. It is quite a large nation, some 40 million, with lots of possibilities, many needs and problems. We will cooperate. We also spoke about anti-Semitism. He told me about the group he set up, a sort of council, under a

minister he presented to me, which is to deal in particular with the issue of anti-Semitism. I appreciated it, but at the same time, I told him that in Poland he has an inheritance from the previous regime, a PLO embassy, which is worse than the anti-Semites. He said that he is not to blame that it exists but that he will not aid the enemies of Israel.

[Golan] Mr. Prime Minister, in your opinion, what sort of policy should Poland take to atone for what happened on its territory during World War II?

[Shamir] I do not have to give Poland advice about what to do. It is enough that there is an awareness. They must uproot the past and establish something new.

[Golan] Do you expect them to support Israel in the international arena, in the United Nations?

[Shamir] If somebody wants to improve his relations with the Jewish people, he has a single test, relations with Israel. He has to maintain good relations. Only in that way will he be able to prove that he has cut himself off from all the hatred and hostility toward the Jewish people.

[Golan] On the personal level, sir, what was your impression of the man Lech Walesa, a simple electrician who became president of a state?

[Shamir] He is full of vigor and ideas, and I believe he will succeed.

Levi Comments; Details of Meetings

TA2005173291 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 20 May 91

[Report by political correspondent Arye Golan]

[Excerpts] The meeting between David Levi, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and Polish President Lech Walesa has just ended. We will soon hear Mr. Levi's remarks about his meeting, but first let us hear additional details about the earlier meeting between the Polish president and Prime Minister Shamir.

That meeting lasted for an hour and was conducted in a friendly and serious atmosphere, as the prime minister's bureau later reported. Shamir and Walesa spoke about the 1,000-year joint history of the two people.

Lech Walesa opened the meeting with the question: Sir, how do you think we should improve the atmosphere between the Polish and Jewish peoples? Prime Minister Shamir responded by saying: I take into account our joint history. Relations between Poland and Israel are developing nicely; but Poland must remember that, if it is interested in good relations with the Jewish people, the way to go about it is to maintain good ties between Poland and Israel. Shamir added: We hope that a new era has begun with Walesa's rise to power; but we must recall that, during the previous communist regime, Poland aided Israel's enemies, and there is still a PLO embassy in Warsaw. [passage omitted]

Shamir said an effort must be made to improve trade ties between the two countries. Shamir added: I know that you have big problems. Israel will be prepared to help as much as it can, especially in the technological field and in the move toward a free economy.

Walesa promised that Poland would not help Israel's enemies. He proposed that Polish and Israeli experts cooperate. Walesa said he enjoyed the meeting and invited Shamir to visit Poland.

Shamir replied: I willingly accept the invitation. He also thanked Poland for the assistance given in the transit of Soviet immigrants to Israel. It is your privilege to help us in this way, the prime minister told the Polish president.

Immediately afterward, a little after 1800, Foreign Minister David Levi arrived at the King David Hotel and also held a one-hour meeting with Walesa. The two have something in common. Let us hear Minister Levi:

[Begin recording] [Golan] Mr. Levi, how was your talk with the Polish president?

[Levi] It was good and interesting; and I believe that we have things in common, since he began his career as a laborer, an electrician, and I began my career as a construction worker.

[Golan] Did you discuss that?

[Levi] Certainly, and we laughed about it. The direct outcome of that should, therefore, be two things: One, we can build the bridge, and two, we can shed light on the future path. [end recording]

The political talks have ended. Lech Walesa left for a short meeting at the president's residence and then a dinner with President Hayim Herzog.

King To Make 'Important Political Speech'

JN2105154591 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn, supreme commander of the Armed Forces, will patronize the graduation ceremony of a new group of students of the Royal War College tomorrow, Wednesday.

His majesty will deliver an important political speech in which he will define the post-Gulf crisis era and the conclusions drawn and the lessons learned from it. His majesty will also touch on the current political efforts to find a solution to the Palestine question and to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict so as to establish a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Portuguese Foreign Minister Arrives for Talks

JN2005170091 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1110 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Portuguese Foreign Minister Joao de Deus Pinheiro arrived in Amman today on a short visit to Jordan, during which he will meet His Majesty King Husayn and hold talks with Jordanian officials. More details on the Portuguese foreign minister's visit and statements at the airport in our correspondent's report:

[Begin recording] The Portuguese foreign minister's visit to Jordan, which he began today, is part of a tour to a number of regional countries to examine developments in them, especially since Portugal will head the European Community [EC] at the beginning of next year, and will also become a member of the political EC troika committee as of July.

The two sides, the Jordanian headed by Foreign Minister Tahir al-Masri and the Portuguese headed by Foreign Minister Joao de Deus Pinheiro, held a session of official talks this morning, during which they reviewed current efforts in the region to establish peace and resolve the Arab-Israeli and the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts based on the importance of Jordan's role in all current efforts and Portugal's role in the EC, which it will head at the beginning of next year.

The two sides expressed the need to stop the establishment of Israeli settlements in the Arab occupied territories in light of the dangers they pose to current peace endeavors.

During the session, the Jordanian side explained the nature of brotherly Jordanian-Palestinian relationship from old times, and Jordan's historic commitment to the region's issues in general.

They also touched on bilateral relations and the means to promote and develop them, especially with regard to economic and trade relations. Views were close on the various issues raised.

The Portuguese foreign minister had made statements upon arrival in which he praised His Majesty King Husayn's wisdom and experience, and Jordan's foreign policy on regional issues—the issue of peace in the Middle East and the future of Arab-European relations in particular.

He said that the Middle East problem, the repercussions of the Gulf war, and EC relations with Arab countries will be the center of his talks with the Jordanian officials. He stressed that his country, during its presidency of the EC, will work to enhance the EC's relations with Arab countries. He said: If we want to do something in this regard, we must prepare for it.

With regard to his country's position on the efforts for a peaceful settlement for the Middle East crisis—the U.S. efforts at this stage in particular—the Portuguese foreign minister said: We are members of the EC and are part of all the positions the EC has adopted in the past years on the Middle East issue despite some events that took place. He added: We feel there is a chance now to push these efforts forward, and we must exert more efforts not only to end the state of war, but also to reach comprehensive peace in the region.

He said that the EC has voiced its support for U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's proposals to settle the Middle East crisis, although the European position on the peace issue was clearly expressed in the known Venice and Madrid Declarations. No change has or will occur in this position. [end recording]

Meets King, Prince Hasan

JN2005174691 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn received Portuguese Foreign Minister Joao de Deus Pinheiro at the Royal Hashemite Court this afternoon. They discussed the most important regional and international issues and bilateral relations. The meeting was attended by the chief of the Royal Hashemite Court and the foreign minister. It should be noted that as of 1 July, Portugal will be a member of the European Troika.

This morning, His Highness Crown Prince Hasan received the Portuguese foreign minister and discussed with him bilateral ties in all fields, Arab-European relations, and regional cooperation between the Arab countries and the EC. His highness and the guest minister reviewed the peace process and proposals to resolve the Middle East crisis based on UN resolutions and international conventions. They reviewed efforts made in this respect and Jordan's positive role in them. They also reviewed Israel's practices and policies in the occupied territories and the continuation of Israel's settlement policy in violation of international resolutions and agreements.

Holds News Conference 20 May

JN2005195491 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1600 GMT 20 May 91

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The Portuguese foreign minister said in a news conference before leaving Amman

that he discussed during his visit the current situation in the Middle East and Arab relations with the European Community. Our reporter 'Ali Hamati asked the Portuguese foreign minister on Jordan's role in current peace efforts. He said Jordan has very important role to play:

[Begin recording] [unidentified female reporter] Can you tell us how did the meeting go with his majesty and the Jordanian officials and what results did you come out with?

[Pinheiro] My objectives were to discuss with Jordan authorities the current situation in the Middle East plus the relations between the European Community and the region, and in this particular case Jordan, taking into account recent developments but, essentially, future prospects. And I could benefit from listening to my colleague and to his majesty, because a very good picture was given to me, a very clear one on the main issues which ought to be addressed now and that ought to be considered in the future. I must confess that it was not difficult to establish a flux [as heard] between myself and my colleagues and also with his majesty, whom I have the privilege of having met before. And so I think the objectives I had for this first visit were accomplished.

[Hamati] Mr. Minister, you have met with His Majesty King Husayn and Crown Prince Hasan and the foreign minister. How significant do you think Jordan's role is, and how does Jordan fit in the forthcoming stage of solving the Middle East problem?

[Pinheiro] I think that Jordan is an obvious, indispensable part in whatever arrangement—be it political, security, economical, social, cultural. It will have to be always one of the most important partners in discussing the situation here, and whatever the question on the table.

[Hamati] Mr. Minister, please correct me if I am mistaken. The United States of America in its current policy has contained or maybe swallowed any European role in solving the Middle East problem. Can you add on that?

[Pinheiro] Well, I don't agree with that. I think that I can agree with you that the United States has a major role in this particular moment, but I think that Europe has a very important role to play, not only now but also in the future. It is the market that is closest. It is a very interesting market in terms of complementarity with Middle East exports, and therefore, I think there are so many reasons for closer relations between Europe and the Arab world and the Middle East as a whole that I think it... [rephrases] the odd thing is to be apart. The natural thing will be to work very closely together.

[Hamati] And can we say the independent role of Europe concerning the Middle East side is over in this case?

[Pinheiro] No. Europe, I think, has a role to play. We are open to play that role. All of the countries that we have been seeing in the Arab world want Europe to play that role. And I believe that the United States and the Soviet Union ought to welcome that role. So I think at the end we will play that role that the vast majority wants us to play.

[Unidentified reporter] What do you think should be done to stop Israel from building settlements?

[Pinheiro] I don't know, to be honest, what can be done to stop. [sentence as heard] But I think that what ought to be done is to have a single standard in appreciating international events. We cannot have double standards in what regards international situations. So UN resolutions have to be accepted and have to be the basis for the current problem, and the simple fact that in Europe we call it occupied territories, I think explains fully well what we think about those territories. They are occupied territories.

[Hamati] [question indistinct]

[Pinheiro] We have been doing that. Quite recently we had the chance of meeting our Israelian [as heard] colleague, and we openly told him that we thought it was wrong and that it was not good for the peace process that we are discussing currently.

[Third reporter] [words indistinct] do you expect that Israel will accept a European role in the conference?

[Pinheiro] Yes, I hope so, because I am fully convinced that it is for the benefit of everybody—the presence of the European Community not only in the present but thinking mainly in the future.

[Hamati] But even the United Nations role is refused by Israel. I mean, how can you justify their acceptance for the European role?

[Pinheiro] You have to ask Israel. [end recording]

Those were excerpts from the [Portuguese] foreign minister's press conference today.

The Foreign Minister Tahir al-Masri also commented on the Portuguese foreign minister's visit to Jordan.

[Begin recording] [unidentified reporter] How do you evaluate Portugal's role as a key player or as a player in the peace process?

[Al-Masri] We have to look at the Portuguese role from within the European role. As I have said before, the Portuguese foreign minister is here because Portugal will be part of the troika as of July. And they will assume the presidency of the community as of January. So the minister is coming to acquaint himself with the leaders of this area, with the problem and to hear firsthand information. But Portugal admits that it is a small country. It has no direct interest—political or economic—in this area, and their role, the bilateral role, could be less than other European countries—but we still need such a role, and we still need the understanding of the collective European countries and the individual European countries.

[Hamati] Mr. Foreign Minister, can we say that the nature of the Portuguese foreign minister's visit to Jordan is within the framework of the Portuguese role, or within the forthcoming role of Portugal in the European Community?

[Al-Masri] The main one is in the form of the new role they will play as the president of the community in January. But at the same time, they have their own interest. It is not as important or as big as the other countries or as their role as leader and president, but it still exists. [end recording]

Reportage on Visit by PLO Political Chief

Discusses Developments With King

JN2005152491 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn received PLO Political Department Chief Faruq Qaddumi at the Royal Hashemite Court this afternoon. Qaddumi conveyed to his majesty the greetings of his brother Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat. His majesty and Mr. Qaddumi talked about current peace efforts and reviewed the latest Arab developments. The meeting was attended by the chief of the Royal Hashemite Court, the king's political adviser, the king's military secretary, and the Palestinian ambassador in Amman.

Meets With Prime Minister

JN1905171791 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1550 GMT 19 May 91

[Text] Amman, 19 May (PETRA)—PLO Political Department chief Faruq Qaddumi has stressed the importance of the existing coordination and cooperation between Jordan and the PLO and between the PLO and the Arab frontline states, especially concerning current peace efforts.

In a statement to PETRA and Jordan television after his meeting with the prime minister today, Qaddumi said contacts, coordination, and full cooperation with our Jordanian brothers, as well as with our brothers in Syria and Egypt. [sentence as received] The PLO also informs the brothers in the Arab Maghreb of these contacts because these brothers are making efforts and supporting the Palestinian cause. He said the PLO is currently holding direct contacts with all Arab countries, although at varying levels.

Qaddumi did not rule out the likelihood of a meeting soon between His Majesty King Husayn and Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat.

Asked about the PLO's position on current peace efforts, Qaddumi said: We are participating effectively in these efforts because the Palestine question is the Arab nations' central issue. The Arab countries support the Palestinian cause and support the PLO as a key contributor to these efforts.

Asked about Palestinian representation at the peace conference, Qaddumi said: We must agree about the basics first. We should not turn many procedural problems into real problems—something that Israel is trying to preoccupy us with.

In this respect, Qaddumi stressed that the important points are full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, sovereignty over these territories, termination of the settlement policy, and removal of existing settlements.

He expressed the hope that a meeting of the frontline states will be held as soon as possible to coordinate positions toward current peace efforts. We made tangible progress toward this end, and we held contacts with the concerned brothers during the meetings of the 95th ordinary Arab League session in Cairo on 15 May, he said, adding that the response of the concerned parties was highly favorable.

Asked whether he believes we are really standing at the threshold of a genuine peace in the region in the wake of the four tours of the region by the U.S. secretary of state and that of the Soviet foreign minister, Qaddumi said the United States is trying. We do not want to judge these efforts, he said, but out of our experience, we are watching them with extreme caution because Israel's intransigence is evident.

Asked about the European role in the peace process, Qaddumi said: It has become obvious that the European countries are seeking to play a role in a solution to the Middle East crisis, but the United States, acting upon Israeli demands, is trying to prevent such a role.

He added: It has been proved that the European countries are not in a position to apply pressure and participate effectively in the conference. They may participate as observers. We have a long experience about the positions of the European countries, which together with the USSR, we consider to be friendly.

Libyan Shipment of Military Material Arrives

NC1805072091 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0515 GMT 18 May 91

[Text] A Libyan ship, the (Dona Tarabulus), which is carrying an arms shipment donated by the Libyan Jamahiriyah to the Lebanese Army, docked at Beirut port yesterday afternoon.

The shipment, which will be unloaded this morning, includes 34 T-55 tanks, military trucks, munitions, and other military equipment.

Army Commander Criticizes Treaty With Syria

NC2005110391 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Major General Antoine Lahd, commander of the South Lebanese Army, has described the Syrian-Lebanese brotherhood, cooperation, and coordination treaty as a treaty of capitulation imposed on Lebanon, now paralysed and unable to reject it. He noted that the treaty restricts Lebanon's freedom and sovereignty, wipes out its independence, and gives Syria the right to interfere in Lebanon's internal affairs without this being seen as an infringement of Lebanon's sovereignty or a restriction of its freedom.

At a news conference in Marj 'Uyun this morning, Lahd denied that there are Israeli military reinforcements in the south. He remarked that the treaty has removed any hope that UN Security Council Resolution 425 will be implemented.

Lahd said that the annulment of the 17 May agreement was a disaster and the endorsement of the Syrian-Lebanese treaty will be another disaster. He added that the treaty is not in Lebanon's interest, vis-a-vis both Israel and Syria. He expressed fear that Lebanon may be lost through its division between Syria and Israel.

Phalangist Party Statement on Treaty With Syria

NC2005182291 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1645 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] The Phalangist Party Political Bureau held a four-hour meeting under party leader Dr. George Sa'adah this evening. Following the meeting, it issued a statement clarifying its stand on the distinctive relations between Lebanon and Syria.

The statement said: The Lebanese Phalangist Party Political Bureau held a meeting on 20 May 1991. It conducted a comprehensive review of the stages and means with which the al-Ta'if Accord has been implemented to date and evaluated them in light of the party's policies toward them. It recorded its dissatisfaction with the course these stages and means have taken. It then discussed relations between Lebanon and Syria in light of the following principles:

1. The Phalangist Party is committed to the National Accord document as an integral whole, which is indivisible in letter and spirit.

2. The spirit which dominated the discussion and approval of the al-Ta'if accord is the same which must dominate its implementation. The same course adopted to approve the accord must be adopted to implement it. This course is reconciliatory.

3. Among its adherence to the National Accord document, the Phalangist Party adheres to the nature of the relations linking Lebanon to Syria. The Phalangist Party wants these relations to be fraternal and distinctive. This commitment should be supported by a firm conviction of the need to establish these relations on sound, clear, and frank bases, which call for respect for the sovereignty and independence of the two countries, and their political, economic, and educational systems; for the freedom of their decisions; and consideration of their joint interests.

4. Any agreement between the two countries that is not clear or that does not take the above principles into consideration will undermine the main objective behind our commitment to establish sound and firm relations between the two countries. This objective is to ensure a future characterized by reassurance and mutual confidence, enrich these relations, and achieve peace and prosperity for the Lebanese and Syrian peoples.

The subject of relations cannot be settled by a text but by mutual satisfaction. It can only be achieved according to the principles mentioned above.

The Phalangist Party Political Bureau added: We notice that the text circulated and the course followed in negotiations and discussions do not call for such satisfaction. On the contrary, they arouse fears and apprehensions and run counter to the objective behind our commitment to the principle of brotherly relations between the two countries.

Therefore, for the sake of the interest of the two peoples, which is only built on mutual confidence, the Phalangist Party Political Bureau urges the officials of the two countries to correct what must be corrected and clarify what must be clarified through an accurate and sound draft that reassures, clearly respects the above principles, achieves a positive historic step to which the sincere officials of the two countries aspire, and promises a bright future.

Al-Musawi Elected Hizballah Secretary General

NC2105103391 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] Hizballah has announced that 'Abbas al-Musawi was elected Hizballah secretary general, replacing Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayli.

Hizballah Reportedly Kills 10 Lahd Militiamen

NC1705183891 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 17 May 91

[Text] There are conflicting reports about a Hizballah operation in the south today. Hizballah sources affirmed that at least 10 members of the Lahd militia were killed when resistance men detonated an explosive charge while a Lahd militia patrol was passing near the Bayt Yahun crossing at the entrance to the western sector of the occupied security belt.

The Lahd militia said that an explosive charge went off under a civilian vehicle while attempting to enter the security belt area, adding that two of the occupants were killed and three others wounded.

Israeli artillery shelled three villages north of the security belt. There were no reports concerning casualties.

More Israeli Reinforcements Reported in South

NC2005131391 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1150 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] The Israeli occupation forces and their agents have brought in more troops and vehicles to the occupied border strip, where they have taken up new positions, begun staging patrols, and set up roadblocks. Ever greater restrictions are being imposed on the citizens as part of the repressive measures against them.

According to reports from the south, the Israeli military reinforcements have reached the Jazzin area. Eyewitnesses said that a mechanized military convoy entered the al-'Urqub area and assembled on the Shab'a farmland before taking up forward positions.

Israeli Raid Reported in South

NC1805142591 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1400 GMT 18 May 91

[Text] REUTER, citing security sources in the South, reports that Israeli enemy aircraft today raided the Shabriha area in southern Lebanon, firing two missiles at an Amal Movement base. Preliminary reports indicate that at least 15 people were wounded in the raid. Material damage was also reported. The sources added that the raid began when the aircraft fired one missile at the Amal Movement position. A few minutes later, after ambulances, rescue teams, and journalists went to the scene, another air-to-surface missile was fired at the position. REUTER correspondent Ahmad al-Qasir was slightly wounded.

Palestinians Shoot at Israeli Helicopter

NC2105051291 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] Security sources in Tyre told REUTER last night that Palestinian gunmen used antiaircraft guns on an Israeli military helicopter that flew over al-Rashidiayh camp near Tyre for one hour and dropped flares over it.

Israeli Warplanes Overfly Palestinian Camps

NC2105090591 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0845 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] Israeli warplanes resumed their flights over the South today, breaking the sound barrier in several sorties over the Palestinian camps.

'Zionist' Troops Shell Al-Biqa', Camp

NC2105062491 (Clandestine) Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic to Lebanon 0530 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] Last night the Zionist occupation troops fired approximately 20 artillery shells at the areas adjacent to the Tallat Sujud, Bi'r Kallab, and al-Radar areas in western al-Biqa' from their artillery emplacements in Kafr Huna. No one was killed in the shelling. They later fired [words indistinct] illumination flares over the shelled areas, followed by five others over the area of Kafr Huna.

During the night, the al-Rashidiyah camp near Tyre came under Zionist fire from their gunboats cruising off the camp's coast. A helicopter flew over the camp and dropped illumination flares. The Palestinian fighters intercepted the helicopter with their ground defense fire and forced it to flee.

[In a 2045 GMT report on 20 May, Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic said: "According to security reports from southern Lebanon, Israeli gunboats shelled the al-Rashidiyah Palestinian refugee camp in Tyre at 2130 today."]

Deported Gaza Strip Palestinians Cross Checkpoint

NC1805133591 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1300 GMT 18 May 91

[Text] AFP reported a short while ago that the four Palestinians deported by Israel from the Gaza Strip crossed into Lebanon this afternoon through the Lebanese Army's checkpoint in Marj al-Zuhur, in the southern al-Biqa' valley. The Tel Aviv authorities had accused them of organizing Arab resistance in the occupied Gaza Strip.

Paper Urges Enforcing Legitimacy Against Israel

JN2105112291 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0850 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] Damascus, 21 May (SANA)—In a commentary published today under the headline "Racist No's," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says that the numerous no's that the Israelis place before the current Middle East peace process reveal two bitter realities. The first is that Israel is capable of making these no's public, of expressing strong opinions about them, and also of voicing readiness to stick to them to the bitter end. The second reality is Israel's ability to project itself as a party that is capable of defying the will of the international community and also of insolently and arrogantly provoking this will, the paper adds.

The paper goes on to say: Israel's no's are tantamount to a declaration of war on international legitimacy and on the positions announced and confirmed by the presidents of more than one major world power. They are also tantamount to a declaration of war on international laws and norms.

The paper wonders: Can the world accept or digest, within the new order it seeks to build, a fanatic racist state such as the Israeli one? Will this world allow such a state to distort the new order, to destroy it, to ruin its atmosphere, and confuse its moves?

Concluding its commentary, AL-THAWRAH affirms that the world is actually capable of imposing its legitimacy. What is lacking today is a determination by the world to express this capability and to exercise its will, using international legitimacy.

Paper Urges Dealing With Israeli 'Disobedience'

JN2105080591 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 21 May 91

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "Israel's Disobedience", the newspaper TISHRIN says: Silence is no longer possible or acceptable because silence over justice and truth might lead Israel to more and more exceed all bounds of belligerence, and adhere to its no's and the conditions of the status quo it imposes. All this not only squanders the opportunities for peace, but also places the region in an explosive, turbulent, and unstable situation. This radically contradicts the proposals of security, peace, and stability and adherence to the resolutions of international legitimacy.

TISHRIN adds: The experiment and development of events since the establishment of the Zionist entity at the expense of justice, fairness, and Arab existence, affirm that Israel cannot discard its racist and aggressive tendencies. It does not want peace and always refuses to abandon its expansionist schemes and plans by devouring more Arab territories.

The newspaper concludes: There is no doubt that concern for peace and for rendering success to the international efforts, especially the American and Soviet efforts, proceed first and foremost from the need to implement the UN resolutions and apply international legitimacy. The world, as President Hafiz al-Asad affirms, is capable of imposing its legitimacy on any outlaw state. The non-implementation of the UN resolutions is a form of disobedience to international legitimacy. The world must respond to this disobedience with what it deserves.

TISHRIN Comments on Peace, Arab Rights

JN2105070791 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 19 May 91

[From the press review]

[Text] In its comment today, the newspaper TISHRIN writes about the international peace efforts that are being made to settle the Middle East issue. It emphasizes that without doubt Syria's concern for peace is, at the same time, concern for the Arab rights and future.

TISHRIN adds: When Syria stresses that peace means only thing; namely, commitment to international legitimacy, then it follows that there can be no peace as long as the racist Zionist occupation, expansion, and aggression are maintained.

The paper emphasizes that peace has its pillars and components, and that any effort that seeks success and optimism should take these components into consideration and should be based on these pillars. Because Israel rejects peace and tries to undermine efforts to achieve it, it adopts first one stand, then another, proving time and again that it seeks to empty peace of its real components and divert it from its true meaning.

The paper says: If U.S. credibility is being put to a real test, and is at stake, then passing the test of right and justice will undoubtedly prove that no force or will can overcome that of international legitimacy, and that freedom is indivisible.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: Israel knows before others that it is impossible to ignore Syria or to bypass its pioneering pan-Arab position that is concerned about peace. This is because Syria is not only a key state in a successful peace, but also because it is the center of decisionmaking, and one that plays an effective role in the region.

India

Punjab Candidate Killed; Elections Countermanded

BK1805081891 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 18 May 91

[Text] In Punjab, the election to one more assembly constituency has been countermanded. This follows the killing of an Akal Dal-Badal candidate, Mr. Harbhajan Singh Sandhu, near village Dhotia from Nosera Panwan constituency in Amritsar district last night. With this the number of the assembly constituencies where elections have been countermanded has risen to 11. Elections in the Ludhiana Lok Sabha constituency has also been countermanded following the death of a candidate. The election commission has already approved the fresh program of holding elections in six of the assemblies and the Ludhiana Lok Sabha constituency along with the rest of the state on the 22d of next month.

Indefinite Curfew Set in Varanasi After Violence

BK1805131091 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 18 May 91

[Text] In Uttar Pradesh, an indefinite curfew was imposed in some areas under (Chadganj), (Dashasamved) police stations in Varanasi today, following violent incidents.

According to the police, the incidents of stabbing and stone-pelting were also reported from Beniabagh area.

Early Polling Trends in States Reported 20 May

BK2005034691 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] The world's biggest democratic exercise, involving about 20 crore voters, began an hour ago in nine states and four union territories. Under the first phase, the polling is being held today to elect 204 Lok Sabha representatives. Polling is also being held for the 90 seats of Haryana assembly, 294 seats of West Bengal assembly, and about half of the 425 seats of the Uttar Pradesh assembly.

Today's poll will decide the fate of more 3,900 candidates, including two former prime ministers, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and Mr. V.P. Singh; BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leaders, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and Mr. L.K. Advani; and several union ministers including, Mr. Yashwant Sinha and Mr. Subodh Kant.

In Delhi, polling began on a mild note. Our correspondent, who went round several polling booths in the capital, found voters slowly reaching the booths. Among the early voters was the Congress-I president, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and his wife. They exercised their franchise at a polling booth near Nirman Bhavan. Our correspondent S.S. Sethi, who went round some areas of the capital, reports:

[Begin Sethi recording] A quick round of some polling stations in Delhi shows that the polling has started on a low profile. Very small queues of voters are seen at the polling booths. Some presiding officers told me that the turnout of voters is expected to pick up after some time. Fortunately, the weather in Delhi is quite pleasant because of the sudden appearance of clouds. The security arrangements in the capital are very tight and the police seem to be very vigilant to maintain law and order. [end recording]

In Haryana, voters were seen standing in long queues from early this morning in front of many polling booths. Prominent among those who are in the fray include the deputy prime minister, Mr. Devi Lal; union ministers Rao Birendra Singh and Mr. Jai Prakash; and former chief ministers Mr. Bhajan Lal, Mr. Bansi Lal, and Mr. Hukum Singh.

In Uttar Pradesh, polling in 42 Lok Sabha and 207 assembly segments began at 0700 this morning. Eight hundred seventeen candidates are in the fray for the Lok Sabha and about 4,000 for the vidhan sabha [legislative assembly] in the first phase. The curfew in Varanasi was lifted from 0600 this morning to allow the voters to exercise their franchise. Adequate security arrangements have been made for peaceful polling.

In the lone Chandigarh parliamentary constituency, people are seen lining up in most of the 385 polling stations before the start of polling. The union territory has made elaborate security arrangements. The territory has been divided into 12 sectors each under one magistrate. Our Chandigarh correspondent Trehan reports on the early poll scene:

[Begin Trehan recording] The polling for the lone Chandigarh parliamentary constituency has started since 0700. At most of the polling stations I have so far visited, people have started queueing up to exercise their right of franchise even before the time of start. Such people included early morning walkers, shopkeepers, and daily wage earners. At one polling station, an 80-year-old man was the first to cast his vote. He told me with a pride that he has participated in all the elections held so far in the country. The polling during the morning hours is likely to be brisk since most of the voters will try to avoid the scorching heat of the day. The Chandigarh administration has made elaborate security arrangements to ensure free and fair polls. [end recording]

In Bihar, the first round of polling began this morning amid tight security. Thirty five out of 54 Lok Sabha constituencies are going to the polls today. Our Patna correspondent reports voters lined up before the polling booths much before the start of polling.

In West Bengal, polling began on a brisk note with a large number of voters, particularly women, lining up in front of the polling booths to cast their votes.

In Himachal Pradesh, polling for the four Lok Sabha seats began on a brisk note. Voters in large numbers are seen in front of the booths from early this morning.

In the union territory of Lakshadweep, a large number of voters gathered in front of the polling booths despite cloudy weather. Eighteeen polling stations have been set up in the union territory exclusively for women. Lakshadweep is witnessing a straight fight for th lone Lok Sabha seat.

In Bhopal, polling began on a moderate note. This morning, our correspondent, who went round several polling booths, reports that women are outnumbering men in many polling booths.

A record number of Central Security Force personnel have been deployed to supplement state police forces to ensure free and fair polling. Over 300 election commission observers will supervise the elections. The commission has issued special directives for sensitive constituencies, which have been under vigil for the last two days.

The chief election commissioner, Mr. T.N. Seshan, has made it clear that the commission will not hesitate to postpone or put off polls, if irregularities such as booth-capturing and rigging come to notice.

Polling Adjourned in 3 Bihar Stations

BK2005090191 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] The election commission adjourned polling in three polling stations of Siwan Lok Sabha constituency in Bihar, following confirmed complaints of irregularities. The chief election commissioner, Mr. T.N. Seshan, told newsmen in New Delhi that extensive booth-capturing has been reported in Patna constituency. He said complaints of booth-capturing have also come in from Arrah and Chapra. These complaints are being verified by the election commission before taking any action.

From Uttar Pradesh also complaints of booth capturing have been received from Bulandshahr, Itawa, Hapur, Meerut, Rai Bareli and Baghpat, and Pratapgarh. These are being examined by the commission.

From West Bengal, some complaints of poll irregularities have come in from the Howrah constituency.

Mr. Seshan said minor complaints received in Delhi are being attended to. The chief election commissioner said polling is going on smoothly in Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.

Moderate to brisk polling is reported in the first round of election to the 204 Lok Sabha and nearly 600 assembly seats in nine states and four union territories. Polling, which began at 0700 [0130 GMT] in the morning, will continue till 1700 in the evening.

A team of AIR [All India Radio] correspondents after visiting several polling booths in Delhi report that the turnout of voters, which was rather mild in the morning, became brisk during the day. Long queues of youths, women, and the aged are seen at the polling stations. A mild drizzle in the morning and an overcast sky is another factor for heavy turn out. A lot of enthusiasm is noticed among the people in slum and rural areas. Elaborate security arrangements have been made to ensure a peaceful poll.

Brisk polling is reported from Calcutta and its suburbs. On an average, a vote per minute is being cast in most of the booths. In some booths, women outnumbered men. A light drizzle in the morning could not dampen the spirit and enthusiasm of the voters who were standing in long queues even before the polling began.

Reports from Bihar speak of moderate polling and our Patna correspondent after taking a round of about 100 polling booths in Patna and Hajipur reports that voters, mostly youths, were seen waiting in queues. In some areas, 30 to 40 percent of votes were cast by noon. Paramilitary forces are staging flag marches in vulnerable areas.

In Uttar Pradesh, nearly 30 percent voters exercised their franchise in the first five hours. Our Lucknow correspondent reports that the turnout of voters in rural areas is less than the urban areas.

Twenty to 25 percent of voters are reported to have cast their votes before noon in the 28 parliamentary constituencies in Madhya Pradesh. Our Bhopal correspondent says a brisk and enthusiastic turnout of voters has also been reported from the tribal district of Bastar.

Polling started on a dull note in Jaipur city of Rajasthan, but picked up later as the day advanced. Some polling stations recorded 28 percent votes before noon.

In Himachal Pradesh, polling, which had picked up earlier during the day, slowed down after scattered rains in various parts of the state and snow in the higher reaches of the entire area of the tribal belt.

In Andhra Pradesh, 40 percent of votes were cast in several booths in Vijayawada constituency within the first three hours. The voters in rural areas turned out in large numbers despite the summer heat. Police fired in the air to disperse two groups of voters who indulged in stone-pelting and stopping the voters to enter the polling booths in the old city of Hyderabad. The city police commissioner told our correspondent that no one was injured in the firing and later the polling resumed peacefully.

In Sikkim, 30 percent of voters exercised their franchise by this morning. Our Gangtok correspondent reports people in long queues are seen waiting patiently to cast their votes before rain starts as usual in the evening.

The union territory of Lakshadweep recorded 35 percent polling in the first three hours for the lone Lok Sabha seat.

Brisk polling has also been reported from the union territory of Chandigarh.

Campaigning ends tomorrow in 114 constituencies of 13 states and two union territories.

Election Violence, Irregularities Reported

BK2005131691 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] In Uttar Pradesh, 12 persons were killed in group clashes, cross-firing, and stabbing incidents in Meerut during today's poll. The entire city has been brought under curfew. An indefinite curfew has also been clamped in Gulawati and Secunderbad town of Bulandshahr District following violent incidents. An official spokesman told our Lucknow correspondent that two columns of the Army have been deployed in these two towns to assist the civil administration for maintaining law and order.

In Bihar, at least three persons, including a polling officer, were killed and five others injured at different places in poll violence. According to an official spokesman the polling officer was shot dead this morning by miscreants at Ramnagar in Siwan parliamentary constituency. One person was killed and 30 injured in bomb blast at Muzaffarpur. Another person was killed in Shidhar parliamentary constituency in group clashes while trying to capture a polling station. An official spokesman said that four vehicles of Mr. Subodh Kant [minister of state for home] were seized and six of his supporters were arrested at Ranchi.

The Election Commission has put off polls in Meerut city and Meerut Cantonment assembly constituencies following violent incidents. A spokesman of the Election Commission disclosed this to news persons in New Delhi this evening.

Reports of booth-capturing and other poll-related irregularities have come in from the Lok Sabha constituencies of Bagpath, Haridwar, and Buland Shahr in Uttar Pradesh. Similar complaints have also been received from some of the Lok Sabha constituencies in Bihar. These are Patna, Jahanabad, Purnia, Arrah, Sitamarhi, Araria, Ranchi, and Jameshdupr. The Election Commission is getting in touch with the returning officers of these constituencies to confirm these complaints before taking the final decision.

In the Chhapra Lok Sabha constituency, polling has been put off in 32 booths after reports of booth capturing. In Siwan, three polling stations witnessed similar irregularities following which elections were postponed. At Asansol in West Bengal, there were attempts to snatch ballot papers.

The Election Commission says repoll will be taking place on Wednesday [23 May] in all the polling stations where the polling was put off today.

The Janata Dal has alleged large-scale violence and electoral malpractices by the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in Uttar Pradesh. The party spokesman, Mr. Jaipal Reddy, said the BJP had created what he called a condition of terror in Meerut in a bid to prevent the minorities from voting. He further alleged that the BJP was also behind the spurt of communal violence in Varanasi and Kanpur. Mr. Jaipal Reddy also accused the Congress-I of resorting to violence in Muzaffarpur and Bagpath.

The CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] has demanded cancellation of polling in several booths of Varanasi parliamentary constituency in Uttar Pradesh alleging malpractices by the BJP. Talking to reporters in New Delhi, the party spokesman also complained that a section of the voters were intimidated and the police did not take any action. He also held the BJP responsible for violent incidents in Meerut and Kanpur. The CPI-M spokesman also urged the commission to countermand the poll for the Purnia Lok Sabha seat in Bihar alleging large-scale booth-capturing at the behest of an independent candidate.

The BJP has alleged large-scale booth-capturing and other irregularities during today's poll, particularly in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The party vice president, Mr. K.R. Malkani, and party spokesman Mr. J.P. Mathur told newsmen in New Delhi that voters were not allowed to cast their votes by members of the particular community at seven polling stations at Varansi in Uttar Pradesh. They said they have telephonically intimated the Election Commission about this incident. The party has also in a letter demanded an inquiry into complaints of malpractices by the polling staff in the Patna Lok Sabha constituency.

Polling in the first phase of elections in 204 Lok Sabha and about 600 [state] assembly seats in nine states and four union territories ended at 1700 [1130 GMT] this evening. Reports of moderate to brisk polling are pouring in from the states and union territories where elections were held today. In the capital, 45 to 50 percent of the electorate exercised their franchise to the Lok Sabha polls.

'Moderate to Brisk Polling' Reported

BK2005164091 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 20 May 91

[Excerpts] Moderate to brisk polling has been reported amidst reports of violence from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the first phase of elections to the 204 Lok Sabha and about 600 [state] assembly seats today. About 50 to 55 percent of the 197 million electorate exercised its franchise spread over nine states and four union territories.

The chief election commissioner, Mr. T.N. Seshan, told newsmen in New Delhi this evening that polling in most states remained largely incident-free. Repolling has been ordered for Wednesday [23 May] in most of the polling stations where elections were put off following violent incidents.

Mr. Seshan said reports of extensive violence have come in from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Describing the violence in Meerut as the worst, Mr. Seshan said the entire city has been placed under curfew. At least 14 people were killed in the city in group clashes, cross- firing and stabbing incidents. [passage omitted]

Three persons, including a poll official, were killed in violence in Siwan. Our correspondent reports that three persons were shot dead in Jahanabad. [passage omitted]

In all, nine persons were killed and 23 persons injured in poll violence in different parts of Bihar today.

Polling in West Bengal passed off peacefully, barring a few minor incidents. Mr. Seshan said four cases of booth-capturing have been reported from Asansol. The state chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, told newsmen in Calcutta today that some people hurled bombs in front of two polling stations and stamping of ballot papers and Jamburi and Bali assembly constituencies. Our correspondent reports that in South Calcutta the election office of the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] was attacked by the Congress-I supporters in which six CPI-M workers were injured.

In Uttar Pradesh, elections to 42 Lok Sabha and 210 assembly seats were held in the first phase of the elections. Here is a report from our Lucknow correspondent Ramji Tripathi:

[Begin Tripathi recording] Moderate to heavy polling has been reported from different parts of the state. In the rural areas, the turnout of voters was very poor, whereas in the cities and towns it was heavy. Asked about the poor turnout of voters in the rural areas, the voters said that they are generally indifferent because of the frequent elections. They also blamed the weather for dull polling. The voters had performed their sacred duties by casting their votes, but the results will be known only after a week. [end recording]

In Andhra Pradesh, four persons were killed and 53 injured when police opened fire to control unruly mobs at several places in Narasaraopeth constituency. A senior police official told our correspondent in Vijaywada that the mobs indulged in hurling bombs at Chilakalurpeth. In Vijaywada, 62 to 65 percent polling was reported. Mr. Seshan told newsmen in New Delhi that 64 incidents of rigging were reported from Andhra Pradesh spread over Angul, Bapatla, Guntur, Hyderabad City, and Narasaraopet.

In Himachal Pradesh, 50 to 60 percent polling has been reported against 64 percent during the 1989 elections. Our Simla correspondent V.K. Thukral reports:

[Begin Thukral recording] In the hill state the polling for the four Lok Sabha seats ended on a peacful note barring some stray incidents. The state government had made elaborate arrangements including security for smooth conduct of one-day poll in all the 78 segments. At (Salgral) polling station of Lahaul in the tribal district of Lahaul and Spiti, a record turnout of 62 percent was registered in the first two hours. The tribals came out in large numbers to cast their votes despite snow in the upper reaches. The polling, which slowed down following the rain, picked up during the day. [end recording]

Polling in Madhya Pradesh was generally peaceful except for attack on two polling stations in (Sarguja) Lok Sabha constituency where repolling has been ordered. Our Bhopal correspondent Masud Ahmed reports:

[Begin Ahmed recording] A happy feature of the polling this time was an enthusiastic 30 percent turnout of voters in the tribal district of Bastar which is a new record for this district. The reason for this welcome change is believed to be massive security arrangements and use of a helicopter for overall surveillance of the law and order situation. Another discernible aspect was a more spontaneous and enthusiastic participation of women in the exercise of their right to vote. [end recording]

Mr. Seshan said Haryana had smooth polling in all its 10 Lok Sabha and 90 assembly constituencies. Only three incidents of booth capturing were reported. Our correspondent reports that repoll has been recommended in eight polling stations in the state. The chief electoral officer told our correspondent repoll has been ordered in one polling station each in Kalanaur, Adampur, Rewari constituencies and two polling stations in Palwal assembly constituency and three polling stations in Meham constituency. Sixty-five to 70 percent polling has been reported in the 10 Lok Sabha and 90 Vidhan Sabha [State Assembly] seats.

In Rajasthan, repoll has been ordered in 25 booths in the parliamentary constituencies of Sawai Madhopur, Bharatpur, Dosa, and Bikaner. The chief election officer told our correspondent in Jaipur that repoll will be held on Wednesday [22 May]. Earlier report said about 60 percent voter turnout was recorded today. Mr. Seshan said in New Delhi that 11 incidents of booth capturning were reported from the state. Polling in the rest of the state is largely incident free.

In Andaman and Nicobar Islands, about 60 percent polling is reported from the lone Lok Sabha seat. A 118-year-old woman was among those who exercised their franchise in a polling booth in the capital Port Blair.

In Sikkim, about 55 percent of the electorate exercised its franchise for the lone parliamentary seat. In Lakshwadeep, a turnover of 75 to 83 percent has been reported for the lone Lok Sabha seat, according to preliminary reports. [passage omitted]

Repolling Ordered as Violence Escalates

BK2105045391 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] Repoll has been ordered in at least 285 booths of a number of constituencies in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan following incidents of booth capture, rigging, and violence. Official reports say that at least 37 persons have been killed in violent incidents on the first day of the poll yesterday. However, the news agencies put the toll higher.

In Bihar, repolling has been ordered in 150 booths of 12 constituencies which will be held tomorrow. The state joint chief electoral officer, Mr. D. Chakrabarty, told our

Patna correspondent that the figure may increase as reports from far-flung areas are yet to come in.

According to official sources 50 to 60 percent voters exercised their franchise in 35 Lok Sabha constituencies yesterday. At least nine persons were killed and several others injured in poll violence in different parts of the state yesterday. About 200 antisocial elements have been arrested for causing obstructions in smooth polling.

In Uttar Pradesh, at least 17 people were killed in Meerut town in group clashes, cross-firing and stabbing incidents. This was told by the state home secretary in Lucknow yesterday. The entire city has been placed under curfew following violent incidents.

An indefinite curfew has also been clamped in (Gulwathi) and Secunderabad towns on Bulandshahar District.

In Kanpur, the Army has been called out following some violent incidents last night in which two persons were killed and 13 injured. With this, the death toll in the recent violence in the city has risen to six. The police inspector general told our Kanpur correspondent that additional companies of paramilitary forces are being deployed in the sensitive areas. The situation is stated to be tense. In all, 24 persons have been killed in poll violence in the state yesterday. The concerned returning officers have recommended a repoll in 250 polling stations in 15 districts in the state following incidents of booth capturing, rigging, and intimidation of voters in yesterday's polling.

In Rajasthan, repoll has been ordered in 33 polling stations of five Lok Sabha constituencies of Sawai Madhopur, Bikaner, Bharatpur, Alwar, and Dosa.

In Haryana, repoll has been recommended in eight polling stations.

In Madhya Pradesh, the state electoral officer has recommended repolling in seven more polling booths following incidents of booth capturing. The election commission has already ordered repolling in four booths in Sarguja District.

In Andhra Pradesh, the state chief electoral officer has announced repoll in 98 polling stations in Guntur, Bapatla, Elur, and Wongol where polling was disrupted due to violence.

Meanwhile, indefinite curfew has been clamped in Narsaraopet town of Guntur District following violent incidents yesterday. Additional forces are being rushed to control the situation in the town. As already reported four persons were killed and 53 injured when police opened fire to disperse unruly mobs. Police also resorted to firing in two more places in Guntur district to quell rioting groups. Our Bijaywada correspondent N.B.S. Prasad reports:

[Begin Prasad recording] Repolling was ordered in 98 polling stations in Guntur, Bapatla, Wongun, Elur, Nalgonda, and Mirialgora parliamentary constituencies of Andhra Pradesh where polling was interupted due to violence yesterday. The chief electoral officer, Mr. C.R. Kamalnathan, told AIR [All India Radio] that repolling will be conducted tomorrow in 50 stations in Guntur, 22 stations in Bapatla, eight stations in Wongun, two in Elur, one each in Nalgonda and Mirialgora constituencies. Though People's War Group Naxalites [Maoist guerrillas] gave a call for poll boycotting in East Godavei District, the voting pattern shows that the people did not care much. [end recording]

Shoot-on-Sight Orders in Kanpur; Curfew Extended

BK2105094491 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] In Uttar Pradesh, a shoot-at-sight order has been issued and the Army deployed in the sensitive areas of Kanpur, following violent incidents last night. Curfew was extended to two more police station areas of Sisamal and Chamanganj today. It was earlier imposed in four police station areas of Mulganj, Bajaria, Bikanganj, and Colonelganj. The situation is officially stated to be tense, but under control. The death toll in the recent violence in the city has gone up to nine, following recovery of more bodies this morning.

In Meerut, police had to open fire to control a violent mob in Mohalla Makbaradiggi under Railway Road police station this morning. An official spokesman said one person was killed and three were injured in police firing. He said 22 persons have been killed since yesterday in Meerut. Curfew in 13 police station areas of the city is continuing. Forty persons have been arrested so far.

In Varanasi City the security forces are keeping a strict vigil over the situation in the curfew-bound areas.

Iran

Khamene'i Condemns Iraqi Destruction of Shrines

LD2005201691 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 20 May 91

[Excerpts] His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, the guardian of the Muslims' cause, has sent an important message adressed to the Muslims of the world following the desecration of the sacred shrines in the holy cities of al-Najaf and Karbala' by the Armed Forces of the Iraqi Ba'thist regime. The text of the message from the leader of the Islamic Revolution is as follows:

In the name of the Almighty. [passage omitted] The continuing news of the Iraqi Armed Forces' actions in al-Najaf and Karbala', their insults against the holy sites and irreverent entry into the sacred grounds and shrines of the holy lord of the faithful, the holy lord of the martyrs, and the holy Abu al-Fazl, peace be upon them, and the desecration of the shrines of these holy men—which are the altars of the hearts of the world's Shiites and the friends and lovers of freedom—have more than

ever before, revealed these vindictive insults, exposing all the more the great dimensions of their crimes.

May God's curse and anger be upon the Ba'thist rulers of Iraq who, like their ancestors, repeated the tragedy of Ashura. By their savage onslaught against al-Najaf and Karbala', they have committed such deeds that the pen is powerless to describe them, and they have perpetrated such crimes against the holy shrines, the helpless Iraqi Muslims, and the seminaries that had not even been committed by the tyrannical and blood-sucking Ummayyad and Abbasid idols. They have inflicted wounds and pain on the hearts of the friends of the Prophet's household, God's peace be upon them, the gravity of which cannot be compared with any catastrophe in this era. [passage omitted]

The Islamic ummah is a bereaved mourner because of these crimes committed against the sacred sites of the prophet's household—God's peace be upon them—at the hands of the Ba'thist Iraqi mercenaries with the full support of the United States and the rest of the satans.

I express my condolences for this great catastrophe which has befallen the sacred site of God's most exalted trustee, God's desire [the hidden imam]—may our souls be sacrificed to him. And, in order to offer sincere respects to his holy presence and express contempt and revulsion at the enemies of Islam, I declare Thursday, 23 May, to be a day of public mourning. And I shall maintain vigil.

I hope that the efforts and honor of our Muslim government and nation, who carry in their hearts the depth of their love for the household of the prophet—God's peace be upon them—will not allow the perpetrators of this great crime to draw a veil of deception and dissimulation over it. The tongues of orators and poets and the skillful hands of artists and writers should depict with exactness these bitter facts which are part of the tragic happenings of the time.

I ask the vengeful God to defeat and destroy the perpetrators of this crime. [passage omitted]

[Signed] 'Ali Hoseyni-Kamene'i
[Dated] 20 May

Majles Deputies Support Day of Mourning

LD2105102291 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 21 May 91

[Text] The deputies of the Islamic Majles, by signing a petition that was read out during today's open session of the Majles—expressing support for the message of the leader of the Islamic revolution, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamane'i, on announcing a day of public mourning on Thursday—condemned the desecration of sacred shrines and holy places and the seminary of al-Najaf.

According to a report by our correspondent, the petition says: We deputies of the Islamic Majles respond to the important call of the Vali-e Amr [Guardian of the Cause] of the Muslims and leader of the Islamic revolution His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, may his lofty shadow remain on earth, and will join our even-vigilant people in mourning on Thursday the second of Khordad [23 May] to demonstrate our hatred and disgust for the Ba'thist regime rulers, and to sympathize with the oppressed people of Iraq in their sorrow.

President Meets Palestinians, Supports Intifadah

LD1805165991 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1430 GMT 18 May 91

[Text] A group of Palestinian authors, poets, and artists, who have come to our country to visit Tehran's fourth international book fair and the special Palestine stall of that fair, were received by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani this morning. The president was accompanied by Mr. Mohajerani, the vice president in charge of legal affairs; and Mr. Zanganeh, the deputy minister of culture and Islamic guidance. A number of Palestinian artists exhibited their works and thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for its full attention to the Palestinian issue, compromising plots, the strenthening of the Jihad and resistance, and especially Iran's emphasis on the Islamization of the Palestinian issue. They referred to the historic book "Palestine or the Black Record of Colonialism"—one of the works of Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani—and praised that book as one of the best documents of the oppression of the Palestinian people.

The president expressed his pleasure over meeting the Palestinian artists and referred to the Palestinian issue as one of the most important Islamic and regional issues for the Islamic Republic of Iran. He added: The first time I was arrested during the course of the struggle was in connection with the Palestinian issue. Throughout the period of struggle, I was detained and questioned many times with regard to that issue. Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, pointing to the lack of information on Palestine in Iraq in those days—and the translation of the book "The Case of Palestine" [Qaziyat ol-Felestin], said: Today, even our children's slogan is Palestine. They are well aware of the Palestinian issue.

He referred to the Islamic uprising of the Palestinian people—the intifadah—as heartwarming, and said that there is the correct path for the liberation of Palestine. He added: Of course, we must not forget other motives. Islam itself orders us to use all legitimate means to achieve our aims.

The President said that the United States' new grievances concerning Palestine are a source of concern for Islamic circles and the true defenders of Palestine's liberty. He reiterated: One of the reasons for my trip to Syria was to keep alive the Palestinian issue. Thank God, I reached the conclusion over there that Mr. Hafiz al-Asad, too, is serious about the aspirations of Palestine and the salvation of that holy land. I believe that it is the duty of you artists and other men of letters to try as hard

as you can so that the issue of Palestine is not contaminated, so that the basis of the jihad is not forgotten.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani emphasized: The idea that the Zionist will be satisfied with what they have already achieved or that they will give some points to Muslims or Palestinians is wrong. If, under pressure, they give away some superficial points, it will surely be a starting point for further expansion. It is therefore the duty of all of us to increase our efforts for the liberation of Palestine. We must never get tired, since a jihad of this great scale will require a great deal of devotion and sacrifice. I, of course, accept that until now, artists and poets have done their best for Palestine. Unfortunately, however, politicians have not done their best. Governments are to blame over the Palestinian issue. The efforts so far have come from the deprived and oppressed classes and the young lovers of truth. They have devoted themselves and they have been sacrificed. Politicians have usually, misused this great human potential with certain slogans.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani continued: After the victory of our revolution, we hoped to extensively serve the Palestinian cause from a position of power. You saw, however, that the same governments who were the real wrong-doers kept us busy at war so that we could not put our aspiration—which was to help the Palestinian people—into practice. We will never forget the issue, however. We believe that, God willing, one day all of us shall witness the raising of the banner of Islam and Palestine over the al-Aqsa Mosque.

Afghanistan's Mojaddedi Arrives for Talks

LD1805040391 Tehran IRNA in English
1421 GMT 17 May 91

[Text] Tehran, May 17, IRNA—Head of the interim government of Afghanistan Sebghatullah Mojaddedi accompanied by Maulvi Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi, leader of the Islamic Revolution Movement and Burhanuddin Rabbani of the Islamic Society arrived here Friday morning [17 May].

They were welcomed at the airport by presidential advisor for international affairs Ali Reza Moayyeri and several leaders of the Afghan Islamic Coalition Party.

The delegation is to discuss latest political developments in Afghanistan with Iranian officials and leaders of Islamic Coalition Party.

Habibi Receives Afghan Leader

LD2005155391 Tehran IRNA in English
1355 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Tehran, May 20, IRNA—First Vice-President Hasan Habibi told top Afghan mujahidin leader Sebghatullah Mojaddedi here Monday that Iran favors and defends Afghanistan's independence and unity.

"Iran believes that an alliance of all Afghan mujahidin groups will serve the interest of the Afghan people and benefit the country," Habibi said.

He also called for cooperation among regional countries to promote peace and security, saying "our post-revolution experiences support the idea that each and every country of the region should stand on its own feet and not rely on foreigners."

Mojaddedi, who is the president of the mujahidin's self-declared interim government, said it was essential for all mujahidin factions to close their ranks and get united to achieve independence for the country.

Majles Officials Receive British Delegation

LD1605133891 Tehran IRNA in English
1159 GMT 16 May 91

[Text] Tehran, May 16, IRNA—The visiting British parliamentary group discussed the latest developments in the Persian Gulf region, Tehran-London ties and Iraqi refugees plight with a number of Iranian officials Wednesday.

Head of the foreign Policy Commission of the Majles Sa'id Raja'i Khorasani told the MPs that ties with the Persian Gulf states were very important to Iran and that the implementation of the U.N. Resolution 598 (on the Iran-Iraq conflict) can contribute to the security of the region. He stressed that the United Nations must play a more active role in this connection.

The British delegation comprising three representatives of the Labour Party and two of the Conservative Party arrived here Tuesday on an unofficial visit.

Turning to the hostages issue, Khorasani said it concerned the Lebanese groups and asked Western countries to show goodwill towards these groups in order to speed up the release of the hostages.

Meanwhile, Majles Vice-Speaker Asadollah Bayat warned that security in the Persian Gulf region would not be restored without the presence of all regional countries especially Iran.

Warning foreign countries not to interfere in domestic affairs of Iraq, he said the destiny of every country including Iraq must be determined by its own people and through free elections.

Head of the British delegation, Mr. Chaplin voiced his country's willingness to promote mutual ties with Iran and called for Iran's cooperation to solve the hostages plight as soon as possible.

He also praised Iran's efforts for lodging the Iraqi refugees adding that the British Government will make efforts to help the refugees as much as possible.

In related news, Director General of the Western Europe [department] of the Foreign Ministry Hamid Reza Asefi

considered relief supplies sent by foreign countries as insufficient and called for more.

The British MPs called for exchange of delegations between the two countries and promotion of Tehran-London ties.

Libyan Labor Minister Arrives on 4-Day Visit

LD2005094591 Tehran IRNA in English 0718 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Tehran, May 21, IRNA—Libyan Minister of Labour and Vocational Training [title as received] Ma'tuq Muhammad Ma'tuq arrived here Monday morning heading a ranking delegation on a 4-day official visit.

He was greeted at Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport by Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Hoseyn Kamali.

Ma'tuq is to discuss Tehran-Tripoli ties and expansion of technical and vocational cooperation with the Iranian officials.

Bahraini Amir, Iranian Envoy Discuss Ties

LD2005110591 Tehran IRNA in English 0917 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Tehran, May 21, IRNA—Grounds for Tehran-Manama cooperation and the latest developments in the Persian Gulf region were discussed in a meeting of Iran's ambassador to Bahrain Javad Torkabadi and Bahraini Amir Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah on Monday.

The two sides stressed the need for expansion of bilateral political and economic relations.

West's 'Quandary' Over Saddam Examined

NC1705065191 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 8 May 91 p 3

[M. Firuzi article: "West's Quandary Over Saddam's Staying or Going"]

[Text] During the 7-month-long Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the U.S. and its allies were instigating the Iraqi people to rise against the Baghdad rulers.

The U.S. encouragement went to the extent of coaxing the Iraqi people into the belief that the U.S. would back them to topple Saddam Husayn. But after Saddam's defeat in the Persian Gulf war and the eruption of the Shi'ite uprising in the south and the Kurdish uprising in the north, the world witnessed the massive slaughter of the Iraqi people by the Ba'thist army with no resistance whatever and only impotent, helpless resignation.

While some parts of southern Iraq were occupied by the allied forces, the massacre of the Iraqi people, hardly which met American objection, was construed in political circles as a green light by Washington to Baghdad rulers to crack down on the opposition, especially the Shi'ite resistance in the south.

The only other possible conjecture, which seems to be more in the nature of a wild surmise than of objective political analysis, is that the U.S. had engineered a secret plan to keep Saddam in power.

To this writer, it would appear in the nature of things as they have unfolded that Washington does not want Saddam Husayn to be in power for long because if he maintains his rule in Baghdad, it would be an insult to, and humiliation for, the West and a defeat for the theory of a "New World Order" proposed by President Bush.

Of course, Washington's agreement with Saddam's downfall, does not mean that the opposing factions in Iraq can seize power.

One would have to be naive to think that the U.S. would allow Iraqi opposition groups, especially the Shi'ites to emerge as the final victor of the Persian Gulf crisis.

From the American viewpoint, Saddam Husayn is a snake without poison who could remain in office for another five to ten years. But if the Shi'ites come into power, they would pose a threat to the U.S. interests in the region and may even influence Kuwait, especially now that the political atmosphere in that country is uncertain.

Now it is understood that Iraqi opposition, both the Shi'ites and the Kurds, have made wrong calculations. It should not be forgotten that if Saddam had been overthrown during the hot days of war, he would propably have been recognized as a hero in many Islamic states and it should not also be forgotten that during the crisis, Muslim factions in different countries in North Africa, Pakistan and even in the Iranian parliament, were in support of Saddam Husayn.

Saddam's true nature was further revealed when he started the mass slaughter of his nation. Now if the West helps to overthrow the Baghdad ruler, no one will shed any tears for him and Rashid Ghannouchi in Tunis and 'Abbas Madani in Algeria cannot portray Saddam as a hero any longer. Still the crucial problem for the West remains unresolved: "Who can succeed Saddam?"

Press Cited on Hajj Policy, U.S. Peace Moves

LD1605105891 Tehran IRNA in English 0902 GMT 16 May 91

[Text] Tehran, May 16, IRNA—The Persian daily JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI said Thursday that as far as Iran and the Iranian Muslims are concerned pilgrimage to Mecca this year will be as politically-charged as was recommended by Imam Khomeyni in 1979. It said the annual hajj ceremonies this year will offer an opportunity to the Iranians to prove if Iran after Imam Khomeyni continues to stand as firmly as it did during the life of the imam.

The daily's commentary quoted the representative of the leader of the Islamic Republic in charge of the annual

hajj ceremonies, Ayatollah Mohammad Mohammadi-Reyshahri as saying "As far as we see it, this year's hajj will be performed in the same manner as previously announced by Imam Khomeyni. Support for the oppressed masses, and the outcries of 'Death to the U.S.' and 'Death to Israel' will continue to be the blueprint for this year's Abrahamian hajj. The propaganda bullhorns of the world arrogance are suggesting that the Islamic Republic of Iran is distancing herself from the aspirations of Imam Khomeyni. That is a conspiracy that must be fought with."

Elsewhere the commentary adverted to the sitation in the occupied Palestine saying that Washington is trying to bring the entirety of Arab leaders to the negotiating table in order to have them sign a self-humiliating agreement which will involve their recogniton of the Zionist regime.

It said to capitalize on the situation and in order to get peace at a further discount the Zionist regime is already rejecting suggestions for peace talks by Arab leaders, pretending that there is now no room for talks, that it does not count on them, and that it does not need to address them at all.

The commentary pinpointed the Soviets as standing behind the Americans in the scheme for imposing a peace agreement on the Arab nations in the interest of the Zionist regime saying "Now Moscow wants to complement its sycophantic service, and seeks to persuade, or perhaps compel, the Arabs to sign a collective treason against the aspirations of Palestine..."

"It is the peoples who have suffered as a result of the incidents in Palestine," said the commentary, "It is the peoples who have suffered during the past half-century. The recipients of cruelty have been the peoples, and today, therefore, the right to say the last word rests solely with the same peoples."

ABRAR, another Persian daily in its Thursday issue said that the U.S. has launched out a propaganda campaign to suggest that the proposition for establishing a security region has already solved the plight of the Iraqi refugees. It said as a result of that the international focus on the plight of the Iraqi refugees is now gradually giving way to a focus on a projected Arab-Israeili peace conference.

"Perhaps it would be rather pre-mature," said the daily in its editorial, "to predict the success or the failure of the Mideast peace conference. But at any rate the strengthening of the intifadah as the principal check against the recognition of Israel should be the primary strategy for solving the issue of Palestine."

TEHRAN TIMES, the English morning daily said in its commentary Thursday that the Zionist regime is not to be trusted in a disarmament agreement. It said the U.S. has proposed the idea of disarming the Middle East and is already proceeding with it in order to "gain all the advantages it can from the unsettled state of affairs in the region.

TEHRAN TIMES commentary said in part:

"(The plan) is to be pushed through the intermediary of U.N. rather than by direct political initiatives. However, if the phrase 'the Middle East' is to include Iran, then the Islamic Republic should oppose the scheme and its application in the case of Iran. In principle the Islamic Republic is in agreement with any proposal aimed at preventing the massacre of innocent human beings. But there is no doubt that the recent American plan aims at the expansion of U.S. dominion and the strengthening of the influence of Israel as its agent in the region.

"How could the countries in the region have trust in the declared disarmament of a regime which has shown total disregard for the most indisputable international rights? The rejection of Security Council Resolution 242 and 338 is only one example of that regime's nonadherence to international commitments.

"It is vitally important for the United Nations and specially the Security Council to beware of U.S. designs to use them as tools for the execution of its strategies. Great harm has already been done to the U.N. prestige by the pernicious influence of the great powers, and any further abuse of U.N. prestige would create serious doubts regarding the legitimacy of the world body."

Larijani on U.S. Concept of Gulf Security

NC1805155191 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 9 May 91 p 16

["Weekly Political Newsletter" by Foreign Ministry adviser Dr. Mohammad Javad Larijani: "The Importance of the Persian Gulf Region?"]

[Text] 1. In his recent visit to the Persian Gulf region, the U.S. Secretary of Defense mentioned that the importance of the region and interests here will become apparent in the future. This is why there are world forces seeking to dominate the region. The United States is already ensuring the necessary preliminary steps!

Does the Persian Gulf region have anything except oil and gas? If so, then what kind of policy will increase its value in the future? Is it the importance of the natural trend of the energy market or international "games" that lend it worth and value?

2. We have no doubts about the importance of energy sources. However, in view of the political influence of the progressive industrial countries, the level of production of energy and its market are in a way in the hands of the consumer! Only in the event of political or unexpected upheavals will the prices rise and continue to do so, until, with a subsequent increase in production and all other prevailing and tested techniques, they come down!

Therefore, the natural trend of the energy market cannot by itself boost the level of the importance of energy. I believe that the Americans think that oil plays the decisive role in the rivalry between Europe and the

United States. The U.S. secretary of defense was alluding to Europe when he said, "The group that is seeking domination over the region" is Iran and it is already in the region and has its own claims to oil, and there is no one else in the region. [sentence as published]

3. The United States takes the oil that it needs in its capacity as gendarme, and thus raises the price for all other consumers. The gains accruing from these high prices will also be used to further U.S. objectives. The Europeans know this full well but have not done much in this regard. Why? Because the Europeans do not have a "European" attitude and are riddled by discord, and the U.S. influence prevents any "serious" measures.

All this deployment and uproar in the name of "security and stability" in the region, and then came the initiation of a worldwide tussle! Even those who merely think in terms of the region's oil should accept that this new system of domination will not last. If serious efforts are not made for eliminating international conflicts from the region, this oil-rich area will once again be ablaze. It is, therefore, imperative that a sensible regional security system be achieved.

Barzani's Call for Kurds' Return Criticized

LD1805102591 Tehran IRNA in English 0755 GMT 18 May 91

[Text] Tehran, May 18 IRNA—An Iranian daily Saturday commentd on the call by Kurdish guerrilla leader Mas'ud Barzani inviting Iraqi Kurds to return to their home country now that a mutual trust has been established between Kurdish negotiators and Saddam Husayn.

Stating that lives of innocent human beings are at stake, the English daily 'KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL' in its editorial asked if Barzani was sure of his friendship with Saddam why was he pressing for international guarantees for the safety and protection of the Kurds inside their own country. "Human life, morality, ethics and international norms are taboo for the man who kills and destroys at will," said the daily referring to the familiarity of the world community and the Muslim people with Saddam's crimes.

According to the paper there are three parties to the Iraqi conflict, Saddam Husayn, the Kurds and the U.S., each of which has its "own special motives to work out a plan that can portray them as a winner."

Saddam wanted to remain in power after the Persian Gulf war and Kurds to activate a 1970 autonomy accord and to get concessions from the central government, it added.

The U.S., however, needs a time out to focus its energy and time "on how best to impose its open-minded military presence in the volatile region." "With a mountain of issues not yet settled, encouraging the two million plus refugees to return after having lost their near and dear ones is not a wonderful idea," said the daily adding that it is in fact another invitation to future instability.

UK's Linking Hostage, Relations Issue Criticized

NC2005170991 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 12 May 91 p 12

[Unattributed commentary: "Britain—Once Again an Illogical Approach"]

[Text] At a time when the issue of the release of the Western hostages in Lebanon is reaching its final stages, Britain has embarked on a plan to reap propaganda benefits. By assuming that the hostages will soon be released, London has entered the arena with a strident posture and declared: As long as our hostages are in Lebanon, relations with Iran will not improve. If the British hostages are released in the wake of this British propaganda, it looks like Iran requested the hostage-takers of Lebanon to release the British hostages due to pressure from London. Under such cirsumstances, Britain would be seen as the "victor" in international propaganda. This is the ultimate example of a government's disgraceful conduct to distort facts on a humanitarian issue.

Today, just as in the past, the Islamic Republic of Iran has endeavored to use its influence among the Lebanese group to secure the release of Western hostages. We see this as a purely humanitarian issue. Naturally, if London's officials are seeking to capitalize on the issue and wish to convey the impression that the hostages were released because of its pressure on Iran, they will certainly not gain in any way.

The fact that Douglas Hurd, the British secretary of state for foreign affairs, has imposed conditions on Iran and has linked them to the British hostages is actually an effort to deface the Islamic Republic of Iran's humanitarian efforts.

It may be added that Britain is the one who has been persistently and vehemently lobbying for the establishment and improvement of ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran. In fact, it was ready to admit complete and humiliating defeat regarding the "Satanic Verses" issue and make a complete retreat from its stance.

Now that the ties have been resumed, it is seeking to compensate for its defeat in British public opinion by this threat. The imposition of such conditions is not favorable to the British because they have always been in a pleading position. It was necessary, therefore, that in the event of a possible improvement of relations it should be clarified that in reciprocal relations the decision is never one-sided. Instead it is the decision of the other side which is effective. It is this kind of approach from London's mouth that ultimately affirms that once again their hands are extended toward us for an improvement of relations.

Of course, it is not yet clear if Douglas Hurd's statements are in accordance with the official position of the British Government or are his personal opinion. Such remarks are considered extremely thoughtless in the political lexicon, not to mention how difficult it makes the

Islamic Republic of Iran's efforts regarding the hostage issue. In any case, the illogical position of the British is intolerable and London should provide clarification. It should know that with this conditional attitude it will not gain anything.

USSR Said To Follow in Wake of U.S. Policy

LD150174291 Tehran IRNA in English 1027 GMT 15 May 91

[Text] Athens, May 15, IRNA—Aleksandr Bessmertnykh last week became the first Soviet foreign minister to visit Israel since it was implanted in Muslim Palestine in 1948, a signal that Moscow wished to improve ties with Tel Aviv.

Although he sidestepped questions on the timing of full Soviet-Israeli relations, a review of recent Soviet policy under Mikhail Gorbachev towards the Zionist state points that resumption of relations cannot be very far off.

The Soviet Union has been gradually scaling down its conditions for re-establishing relations with the Zionist state since Gorbachev came to power in 1985.

At first Moscow set the withdrawal of Israel from Arab territories occupied since 1967 as a condition for resuming diplomatic relations with Israel.

This was later replaced by the condition of holding an international Mideast peace conference. Moscow then retreated one more step and said progress on the peace process would be enough to re-establish full relations with Israel.

Now Moscow is sending signals that it was preparing to resume diplomatic relations with the Zionist state without any preconditions.

After the outbreak of the Persian Gulf war, the Soviet Union has revised its Middle East policy which had blamed Israel as the only cause of tension in the region.

Consular ties between Moscow and Tel Aviv were resumed last year and the two signed a protocol to increase trade exchanges to dlrs 4 billion by the end of this year.

Following Baker's shuttle diplomacy in the region, Moscow began to chart its new policy in the Middle East. The Soviet policy is aimed at coordinating and not clashing with U.S. policies in the region.

Soon after the third visit of Baker, Moscow announced that it would send its foreign minister to the region, including Israel because the Soviet Union argued that it could not play an active role unless it restored full diplomatic relations with Israel.

Moscow thus bowed down to an old U.S.-Israeli condition. Right from the start of the concept of an international Mideast peace conference, the U.S. and Israel had put two conditions for Soviet participation in the peace process.

One, to open its gates to Soviet Jews to migrate to occupied Palestine, and secondly to resume full diplomatic relations with the Zionist state, cut since 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Till now hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews have descended on occupied Palestine after Gorbachev allowed them to leave.

But by adopting the American conditions, the Soviet Union has in reality limited and restricted its role in the region. Firstly Moscow has lost trust of the Arab countries, and further any role of Moscow in the U.S.-proposed regional conference would be merely cosmetic and not real.

During his visit to the region, the Soviet foreign minister brought no new initiatives or fresh ideas with him to promote peace, but he only expressed support to the U.S. initiative.

The rift and differences among Arab states and the absence of a strong united Arab policy has also contributed to the shift in the Soviet policies towards the Middle East.

Engrossed in its own domestic problems, the Soviet Union is unlikely to play any effective role in the Middle East, at least in the near future.

UN Team To Assess War Damages

LD200514089l Tehran IRNA in English 1322 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Tehran, May 20, IRNA—The United Nations will soon despatch a delegation to Iran to investigate damages inflicted on the Islamic Republic by Iraq during the eight-year old imposed war, Iran's U.N. envoy Kamal Kharrazi said. Kharrazi in an interview with ETTELA'AT appearing in its today's issue, said the Iraqi regime due to facing numerous difficulties after the Persian Gulf war, has to classify its problems. "This can affect the peace talks between Iran and Iraq," Kharrazi said indicating that the process may take some time.

He termed Baghdad's charges that Iran was interfering in Iraq's internal affairs as "some sort of justification to overshadow the blunders the Iraqi officials have committed." Kharrazi said diplomatic relations between the two countries Reestablished last year, continued to exist.

The world powers, particularly the U.S. want a state of tension to remain among the regional neighbours, which Kharrazi said would delay the peace talks, and subsequently, the implementation of the U.N. resolution 598.

Despite the apparent positive role played by the U.N. in dealing with global issues, the world body was still a means in the U.S. hands to serve its own interests.

"Now that the cold war has ended, and the Soviet Union is no more a rival, the U.S. directs the stances of the Security Council at the United Nations," Kharrazi said.

On the efforts of Iran's U.N. mission for absorbing the Iranians abroad, Kharrazi said it was "an important step towards boosting the country's economy."

British Delegation Visits Refugee Camps

LD1705074191 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1930 GMT 16 May 91

[Text] The British parliamentary delegation visited Iraqi refugee camps of Dukanch, Nasr, and Ziveh in Orumiyeh today.

The Iraqi refugees told the visiting delegation that they did not trust Saddam and his promises and announced that as long as Saddam is in power they will refuse to return to Iraq.

The head of the British parliamentary delegation and his entourage, when visiting those two camps [as heard], praised the Islamic Republic of Iran for provision of services for the Iraqi refugees and stressed the necessity for the supply of foreign aid.

German Experts Leave for Bakhtaran

LD1205140191 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1215 GMT 12 May 91

[Text] The first group of German experts has left Tehran for Bakhtaran to instal hygienic sewage systems and water supplies for Iraqi refugees based in the Sar-e Pol.-e Zahab region. The office of the UNHCR in Tehran announced the above and added: The group consists of 38 water experts and technicians. 11 trucks containing water-supply equipment and instruments are accompanying the group from Tehran to the Jegiran district of Sar-e Pol-e Zahab.

President Urges Change in Pricing Policy

LD2005120191 Tehran IRNA in English 0907 GMT 20 May 91

[Text] Tehran, May 20, IRNA—President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said the multiple price practices in the market must be stopped and all potentials in the field of production must be fully utilized.

Speaking to a group of visiting head and members of the Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines here Sunday the president stressed that measures must be taken to remove the going multiple price practices in the market.

At present, commodities and goods are offered in the market at three different foreign exchange rates, official, floating and competitive.

The president said that in the war years the guildsmen because of hoarding and profiteering have left a bad impression in the mind of the public. Now it is time that the Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines in an effective move correct this conduct and work for removal of mutiple rates in the market and stop profiteering so that the public trust in the guildsmen can be restored.

He also said allowing participation of the private sector in foreign trade and also activation of the export work as "levers" in creating "economic balance".

Meanwhile in another meeting with deputies of ministries Sunday night President Hashemi-Rafsanjani stressed the need for eliminating the red tape procedure in the administrative system.

He said at present the decision-making institutions have found their real place and position and the prevailing stability is the product of institutionalization of the decision-making bodies.

While the country is advancing the public expect more fundamental actions from the executive authorities, the most important of which are removal of red tape and unnecessary and hindering regulations.

The president further emphasized that the government in a move managed to reduce the procedure of obtaining passports and driving licences from several months to several hours. This same can be done in many other administrative fields.

He urged the officials to put forward proposals for the betterment of the administrative system. "Closing of an unnecessary department does not weaken any institution but also adds further strength to our executive system," the president told the deputies.

He further noted that a problem which can be solved by a single phone call should not be dragged on in red tape which results in waste of time of the public.

The government welcomes any proposal and initiative for removal of the red tape and solving problems of the people, the president said.

President Cited on Role of Private Sector

LD1905103791 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 19 May 91

[Excerpts] The members of the board of directors and the representatives of Tehran's mines and industry chamber of commerce, together with a number of officials of that chamber, were received this morning by the president, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani. At that meeting, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, pointing to the fact that officials of the system have accepted the activation of the private sector, said: Currently, there are no difficulties in implementation. All capacities must be used in the field of production. The media, the propaganda machinary, and training organizations can also play an important role in this field. [passage omitted]

At the end of his speech, the president emphasized the role of the private sector in foreign trade and the

activation of the export sector as a lever to create economic balance in the society. [passage omitted]

'Toxic' Gases Darken Skies of Fars Province

LD1905125791 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1215 GMT 19 May 91

[Text] According to the Central News Unit, nearly 570,000 tonnes of various gases that cause pollution arrive daily over the skies of Fars Province from the southern Persian Gulf. Due to the atmospheric imbalance caused, many difficulties have arisen for the residents of Fars Province, especially in the large city of Shiraz.

According to the director of the Fars Province Office of Environmental Protection, during Ordibehesht [starting 21 April] of every year, the skies over Shiraz are at their best. But, this year, due to the burning oil wells in Kuwait, there are no signs of the clear blue skies over Shiraz. In fact, the entry of over 500,000 tonnes of toxic and contaminating gases together with large amounts of unburned hydrocarbons, which are drifting from the south to the center of Iran, have blackened the skies over Shiraz. They have made breathing difficult.

41 Drug Traffickers Executed in Mashhad

LD1505175491 Tehran IRNA in English 1129 GMT 15 May 91

[Text] Mashhad, Khorasan Prov., May 15, IRNA—A group of 41 drug traffickers including 22 Afghans were executed here today as per the verdicts issued by the Islamic revolution's tribunal.

Drug addicts and traffickers who carry 30 grams of heroin or five kgs of opium will be executed according to the law.